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DIALOGUE OF
CULTURES AND
RELIGIONS

A. M. M'BOW
ALI KETTANI

ISLAM
AND
MUSLIMS
IN
THE AMERICAN
CONTINENT

BEIRUT - LEBANON
2001

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Collection directed
by
Adel ISMAIL
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Under the direction of

Amadou Mahtar M'BOW
From the Royal Academy
of the Kingdom of Morocco
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ISLAM IN THE AMERICAN CONTINENT



The American Continent

*Introduction by
M'Bow and M.A. Kettani*

Nowadays there is an Islamic presence all over the American Continent. Without exception, in each country of this Continent there is a more or less important Islamic community. The origin of those communities, under which conditions their members practice their faith, as well as the institutions established by them in order to make easier their religious observances and to ensure its fulfillment, their position and their part in every national societies, and the prospects given to Islam within the continent, all these are the purpose of the present work.

To ensure its writing, we called for members of the teaching body: Muslim personalities and teachers, who, besides the investigations carried out have a direct knowledge of the different investigated communities (Author's c.v. shown in appendix). Each research is followed by a bibliography allowing those who wish, to complete their formations.

This book is made of 12 articles. 1) Islam in the Americas before Columbus by professor Quick. 2) Islam in Canada by professor Hamdani. 3) Islam in the U.S.A. by both professors Ghazi and Moinul-Hassan. 4) Islam among Afro-Americans by professor Ansari. 5) Islam in the Caribbean by professor Kettani. 6) Islam in Trinidad and Tobago by Dr. Ibrahim. 7) Islam in Guyana by professor Hamid and Backsh. 8) Islam in Surinam by Dr. Jamaludin and professor Kettani. 9) Islam in Central America 10) Islam in the Andean states 11) Islam in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay 12) Islam in Brazil. Those 4 articles being written by professor Kettani.

These Islamic communities were built in the American Continent after a long process with broken periods, until the end of World War

II, the Muslim who emigrated, by fair or foul means, from Africa, Asia, Middle East and even from Europe, have not been able to worship their faith in the same conditions as other believers of other revealed religion.

However, of all religions of the book, Islam has been the first to be introduced, well before the arrival of Christopher Columbus, on October the 12th, 1492. Muslim from Andalucia, Maghrebian and sub-Saharan countries, were able to establish contacts with the American Continent well before the 15th century. Numerous documents certify this fact. This presence did not survive the Spanish conquest. Conquerors struggled not only to satanised and subdue local populations and ruin striking civilizations, but also to erase all evidence establishing an external presence previous to their own, and particularly those of Islam.

New waves of Muslim came to the American Continent with the European colonization. Among these are Andalucian running away from the Spanish inquisition. But the inquisition caught them in the American earth, and many were tortured, butchered or converted to Christianity. Evidences of this immigration remain in the architecture, arts and even in the population. Many Argentineans and Brazilians, among others, identify themselves today with this immigration, reverting to Islam or openly claiming their Islamicity after having hidden it for generations. In North America, the Melungeons of the High Appalachians are most probably descendants of this immigration. Abraham Lincoln himself is one of its most prestigious members.

For more than three centuries, in addition to these immigrants who crossed the Ocean, voluntarily or not, running away from injustice, will be added those forced immigrants snatched away from the African Continent and transported in the American Continent against their own will. They were a servile manpower which will contribute to the estates and mining exploitation's prosperity. Among them were

many Muslim, mainly educated and possessing a perfect knowledge of Arabic, widely more educated than their new masters. In North America they were forced into Christianity and forced to forget their original languages and habits. They were kept apart the ones from the others in order to mix up their historical and cultural memory; when, by chance, they gave birth, their children were sold very young to take away any possible influence of their parents, and to erase all eventual Islamic links. Today they widely revert to Islam.

Nevertheless, Islam was at the origin of many slaves revolt and resulting in the constitution of "Marrons" groups, getting totally away from the colonial authority, mainly in the Caribbeans and Guyanas. Also it might have survived in some of the slave's consciousness, either in its original shape or through integration of some of the African traditional worshiping, still in force nowadays in various Caribbean countries. In Brazil, slaves African Muslim were able to elude the Christian rules in the 1830, and established a free Muslim state which will only be destroyed after four years of fierce fight against the Portuguese. Following this, the later for bade for several decades all Islamic religious observances. Descendants of those Africans, living in the Bahia State and in Sao Paolo, in Brazil, are reverting in droves to Islam.

During the 19th century. Starting with the slave trading abolition by the U.K. first and then by other European powers, Asia became a new source of labor for the American Continent. New workers are recruited, more or less willingly, in India by British and French, in Java by the Dutch people. They were many Muslim among the Indians, though Javanese were nearly all Muslim. They came with their family and they did set up the first living Islamic communities in the American Continent, and this particularly in the Caribbean and Guyanas. They could build up Mosques, and enjoy a certain freedom of worship within the British and Dutch colonies, because cultural and religious autonomy was admitted; far from this recognition, a

forced assimilation kept useless all kind of Islamic survival in the French territories.

A new wave of immigration originating from the Middle East Arab countries started by the end of the 19th century. Those new comers in America were mainly Christians. Gradually their Muslim descendants, which were a mere minority, lost their Islamic identity during the middle of the 20th century. The period following World War II, marked by the decolonization process and the growth of the Palestinian problem, we will observe an Islamic revival appearing amongst the descendants of those voluntaries or not immigrants. In one hand, this revival coincide with the Afro American struggle in the U.S.A. for their civil rights, and on the other hand with the coming in various countries of the American Continent of students natives from Islamic countries, as well as new Muslim immigrants with a completely different background than their predecessors. At the contrary of the latter which were in majority small traders or workers, most of the new comers are highly educated and religiously trained individuals, able to become the pioneers of the Islamic revival.

Moreover, several young revert to Islam, descendants of the old immigration natives from Africa, or even Andalucian, went back as students in Muslim countries where they could build their faith stronger within a totally Islamic society, and that way acquire an adequate religious training. However Islam converted, even when not of ancient Muslim origin, are becoming more and more numerous and influential within the Muslim communities. Those converted or reverted to Islam amount 20% of the Muslim community in Argentina, 50% in the U.S.A., and even nearly 100% in some of the Caribbean Islands.

The one and the others have an influence in the American Islamic communities, particularly among the students. They are contributing to overcome the divisions which arose between Muslim of different origins. As a matter of fact, Muslim in the Americas had a tendency to

live separately, the same way other immigrants did, according to their countries or continents of origin. In the same time that a Muslim identity is setting up, and that an Islamic consciousness is developing, what so ever their origin, Muslim are interpenetrating more and more, in order to become a sole religious community.

On the other hand, far from staying closed, members of the Islamic communities in America are active in politics, economic, social and cultural life in the countries where they live. They hold often the same predominant position that the other citizens, and this in various fields: political, judiciary, military, civil service, economical or cultural. During the last decades, in the various countries one could count : the Head of State (in Trinidad and Tobago), one Prime Minister (in Guyana) one Head of military staff (in Guyana), and many high ranking military officers, as Lt Cdr - Ayesha Muhammad in the U.S. Navy. For the young Muslim generations, strength in their believes and the ritual, loyalty to spiritual and social requirements, must go on a par with a high reliability feeling towards the national community to whom they belong. Civic duties and mutual respect, beyond religious believes, philosophical convictions, ethnical belonging, are categorical requirements because they obey to Islamic precepts.

So, nowhere one will find situations, or problems similar to those sometimes stated in Europe. Islamic community is no longer systematically satanised nor charged with the worst possible intentions towards others. There is no tendency to forced assimilation undercover of secular state, nor marginalisation under the pretext of non integration. And quarrels about some external identifications signs which are the delights of some European Medias do not exist in the American Continent.

Indeed, everything is far from being perfect in the inter-ethnic relations and with the relationship between the different societies. For instance, the Middle East conflict continues to poison the atmosphere for the Muslim of the United States and elsewhere. Even after the

beginning of the peace process. The behavior of some Medias after the explosion of Oklahoma City, on the 19th of April 1995, and the accusations that the press showered against Islam are but of the most striking example. However, mutual respect appeared to be the rule in the matter of faith and religious practices.

Political leaders, as well as courts show a worthy effort to fight against any discrimination. This is the case in the U.S.A. where lies the most important Islamic Community of the American Continent.

It is also in the U.S.A. that the Islamic Community shows the fastest growth. Indeed, if in 1951 there were about 450.000 Muslims in the American Continent of which nearly half in the U.S. in 1971, 1.6 million of which 1 million in the U.S.A., and in 1991, nearly 8 millions, three quarters of them living in the U.S.A. as one can see the Islamic population in the American Continent who tripled in 20 years, between 1951 and 1971, has been multiplied by five during the 20 years that followed. This increase is partly due, but partly only, to immigration. Indeed, return to Islam are numerous. Conversions are more and more amongst Afro-American, Latinos or Anglo-Saxons, and even amongst Indians.

For many people of the American Continent, Islam appears to be an answer to this search for spirituality and human solidarity in society ruled by materialism with devastating effects on the human and social grounds. Instability of families, and the confusion brought about in children, the teenagers criminality, prostitution, alcoholism, the abuse of drugs, selfishness, indifference towards of the people miseries, are many signs of a grave crisis of values which poisons more and more modern societies.

Muslim communities in the Americas try to protect themselves, not without success, giving thus example of social behaviors safeguarding human dignity, and, indeed, respect of women and strengthening solidarity with the weakest and the poorest. Against the worship of

violence, boundless sexuality, is being build a new way of thinking made up of measures, balanced and reserved.

Because of this Islam is beginning to impregnate so strongly life, spirit, sensitivity, of those who came to it, it gave birth in the field of artistic creations, to works, who using fashionable means of expression, make it possible to broadcast a Coranic message to popularize the spiritual human and social contents, to spread the knowledge of ritual to large groups of population. The most typical example in this field is the one supplied by the "Muslim Youth of North America" who broadcast with "Myrna Raps" series of tapes whose content not only has a high moral and religious value, satisfactory at the same time for the taste of the fans of a type of music very much "in" amongst the youth. Thus, is brought about a cultural osmosis strengthening the presence of Islam and awareness for its message of spirituality, straight for wardens human solidarity and hope amongst the young people, many of which find, thanks to Islamic influence, the meaning of life.

The attraction of Islam is also very strong towards states of the American Continent, several of which already wish to take part to the works of the Islamic Conference Organization, which could open a way for a closer and more habitual cooperation with the rest of the Islamic World. Surinam, boasting the highest percentage of Muslim in the American Continent, was admitted as observer in 1996, and as a full member of the Islamic Conference Organization in 1997, the first American State of the Organization.

Those rustles announce new developments. It is true, no one can forecast with certainty what will Islam be within the Americas during the coming century; but one can state with certainty that Islam is now strongly present in the American Continent, and that Islamic communities know in all the countries an increase in the number of the members and of Islamic institutions. Everywhere there is a will to have adequate worship facilities, as well as educational, cultural and

social institutions, allowing Muslims to live the fullness of their religious, while remaining deeply anchored to the national life.

If the present rate of progression is maintained, the Islamic community could reach 50 millions members by the middle of the 21st Century, half of which would live in the U.S.A. If it were so, the world face of Islam would be modify, not only within the American Continent, but also in the world as a whole. Because Islam has the particularity that even without church, in the institutional meaning of the world, and without a central authority, establishing rules in spite of contradictions that sometimes generate very strong tensions between nations, predominantly Muslim, all the Muslims feel united by the same brotherly thinking, by the same respect, by the diversity of people and beliefs as ordered by Allah, and who makes the essence of a world of peace and justice and mutual understanding.

CHAPTER I

Islam in the America Before Columbus

by

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- 1 - Introduction
- 2 - The Civilizations of North America
- 3 - The Civilizations of the Central America and the Caribbean
- 4 - The Civilizations of South America
- 5 - The Voyages of Andalocian and Moroccan Muslims
- 6 - The Knowledge of the Ottomans
- 7 - Mandinka Voyages and Exploration
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- 9 - The African Gold Trade
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- 12 - Conclusion - References and Notes.

1 – Introduction

For most of the literate world today, the first contact that the Americas had with the outside world was on October 12, 1492 C.E. when Christopher Columbus landed on the island of San Salvador. Historians, then paint a picture of Christian European domination and cultural supremacy. In actuality, the history of the Americas and its peoples stretches back over twenty thousand years. It tells the story of rich continents with thriving civilizations and talented, organized human beings. It reveals, to the objective reader, tales of beautiful cities, abundant agriculture, linguistic and philosophical achievements, high technology, pyramid building, respect and development of women, highly developed political structures, and extensive migration.

Very little mention, today, is made about the presence of Muslims in the Americas till the Nineteenth century with the coming of

indentured laborers from India and then in the Twentieth century with the arrival of traders from the Middle East. The history of Islam and Muslim people in this region extends back, in actuality, over one thousand years, predating Columbus's contact by six centuries. Despite this, Islam has been written out of the history books of the West, or in some cases relegated to the position of a primitive, unsophisticated religion that only motivated its followers to conquer and pillage.

This chapter is an attempt to dispel some of the misconceptions about Islamic history in the Americas and introduce a body of documentation that may help to put the actual achievements and travels of Muslim explorers, merchants and settlers into the proper perspective. In using the name the Americas', I will be looking at the Western Hemisphere, especially North and Central America as one area. The present political boundaries were, of course, in early times, irrelevant, and people were not as divided along imaginary borders.

Pre-Columbian history is rapidly becoming a topic of critical importance to the indigenous people of this region and the younger generation who yearn for a deeper understanding of their "roots" and the original societies. It is hoped that this humble attempt can serve as an overview and a foundation for more extensive research. It is also hoped that the work of those historians, linguists, and archaeologists who preceded us will not have been lost, but will serve as an inspiration for young researchers and lovers of truth, and a contribution toward the rewriting of the history of our planet. Above all, I pray that this work will be a means of gaining the pleasure of Almighty God, Allah, for surely He is Supreme in wisdom and well acquainted with all affairs.

2 – The Civilizations of North America

"For thousands of centuries", reads the 1987 edition of American History : A Survey, co-authored by three eminent American

historians, Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams, and Alan Brinkley, "centuries in which human races were evolving, forming communities, and building the beginnings of national civilizations in Africa, Asia, and Europe - the continents we know as the Americas stood empty of mankind and its works... The story of this new world...is a story of the creation of a civilization where none existed". (1) This image, for the ill informed reader, erases the presence of almost 75 million Native people, mistakenly called Indians by Columbus, who demographers now estimate may have been living in the Americas in 1492 (almost 6 million of them, perhaps in the area of the present-day United-States).

In actuality, the "Paleo-Indians", as they are known, ancestors of modern American Indians, came primarily from Asia and entered North America by way of the Bering land bridge, a wide corridor of land, now submerged, connecting Siberia and Alaska. From Alaska to the Great Plains of the present United States stretched a kind of passageway which served as a thoroughfare for human beings and the animals that they hunted. Over the next 7,000 years these nomads crossed the Bering bridge and dispersed throughout the length and breadth of the Americas (2). This dispersal and the formation of a multitude of societies is one of the most spectacular, untold stories of human history. They found themselves the only inhabitants of one third of the earth's land mass, a vast expanse of ice covered territories, fertile valleys, mountainous regions, scorching deserts, tropical rain forests, wind swept islands, and thousands of miles of sea coast.

On the eve of Columbus's voyages, Native Americans maintained an amazing diversity of languages, greater by far than all of Europe. In 1492, as many as 2,000 separate, mutually unintelligible languages were spoken by the peoples of the Western hemisphere. Of these, approximately 250 were spoken in North America, some 350 in Mexico and Central America, and 1,450 more throughout South America. All of the languages were as rich and complex as anywhere else in the world.(3)

Throughout the Americas, religion served as a binding and structuring factor in society. All nations had a concept of an original creative force, a story of creation, a hierarchy of created beings, and a complex system of interaction with nature and fellow humanity. Because the forms of worship and societies were so diverse, it is not possible in this brief overview to delve into the subtleties of Native American philosophy and culture. Environment was a decisive factor in how each society organized itself and struggled for survival.

By 1492, hunters had occupied the entire northern third of North America. They developed a symbiotic relationship with the animals with whom they shared these lands. From the frozen expanses of the Arctic to the plains and mountains of middle Canada, these early Native Americans hunted fish, whales, seal, elk, moose and other northern animals. They adapted the skins, fur, bones, and fat of their animals for a multitude of purposes in order to survive in the harsh cold climate. Despite the conditions, they generated a highly efficient society of kinship and inter-regional trade. One interesting group of Native people were the "Makah Indians" who inhabited the northern Pacific coastal region of present day Washington state (4). Their dress and some of their names closely resemble Muslims of the desert and savannah region of West and North Africa. They would be an interesting topic for cross cultural researchers (See appendix 1).

Of all the regions of the Western Hemisphere, western North America distinguishes itself for its vast deserts, broad sweeping country, deep canyons, and long, powerful rivers. This arid land mass is known for sparse vegetation but a wide variety of desert wildlife. The people of this region, the Hokan, the Numic, the Algic, the Navajos, the Hopi, the Siouan, the Caddoan, the Tanoan, and other smaller confederations developed a variety of semi-desert cultures. On the plains, a nomadic way of life sustained the Native people. In the canyons and high areas, the ruins of walled stone cities can still be



Appendix 1

seen, testifying to an advanced civilization of highly skilled builders and craftsmen. The dry climate and high rocky areas have retained for archaeologists and linguists traces of the early settlements like the

Hohokam and the Anasazi (the old ones). The people of this region were highly spiritual and their culture was so diverse that theories of not only a high level of development, but also a Pacific contact, are becoming more and more plausible.

The Native people of the eastern land mass of North America were the progenitors of a rich and complex society. Their environment contained mountains, deep woodlands and great lakes. Along with their lasting achievement of living in compatibility with nature, they developed, by 1492, an innovative form of political union. Their multiracial federation, strengthened by agreements for mutual defense and elaborate rules of democratic order set the stage for the Constitution of the United States of America. They were the Iroquoian, the Algonquian, the Muskogean, the Siouan, and the Caddoan. Their largest city was Cahokia, founded in the area of the present day, St-Louis, Missouri in approximately 700 C.E. and occupied for nearly 700 years (5).

3 – The Civilizations of the Central America and the Caribbean

Contrary to Spanish reports of meeting primitive, animal-like people in the Caribbean region, the Arawaks and Caribs were not docile, ignorant savages or bloodthirsty cannibals, but sensitive human beings who had mastered their environment and had become accomplished seamen and highly sophisticated members of a complex society. They had developed a series of languages, a high philosophy, medicine, and political order, yet their culture was almost totally obliterated by the European conquerors. They are one of the most maligned, misunderstood people in the world.

To the west of the islands on the Mesoamerican mainland are the remains of the most highly developed societies of the Western hemisphere. Around 1500 B.C., a people called the Olmecs gave birth to a civilization that boasted the existence of urbanism, large

populated centres with spaces reserved for temples, palaces, schools, marketplaces, storehouses, and army headquarters ; houses for the common people built along well-planned streets, and alleys ; complex social, economic, and political organization ; extremely precise calendars ; glyphic systems of writing ; concern for the preservation of the memory of the past ; guilds of merchants and artisans ; and complex religious practices highlighted by huge pyramids and stone heads that are preserved up till today, (6) (7) (8). The discovery of these huge stone heads with marked African facial features, warrior helmets and Nubian braids (unknown in the Americas) at Tres Zapotes, and La Venta in the Yucatan Peninsula at the end of the Nineteenth century has led many historians and archaeologists to believe that contact was made with the 25th Nubian dynasty (800-654 B.C.). These finds were supplemented with a host of Africoid terracotta and burial artifacts dating back to the same period. Semitic types were also identified lending to the theory of a Phoenician presence in the Olmec society (9) (10) (11). The disappearance of the Olmec society is a mystery. In the Fifth century B.C., their capital was destroyed but their civilization set the stage for further rapid development.

The next great people were the Mayans who reached their heyday about 600 A.D. They came from what is now Guatemala, Belize and the Yucatan and built impressive pyramidal temples. They also constructed spacious palaces, developed hillside terracing for agriculture, a numerical system based on units of 20 and the concept of zero, and a 52-year astronomically based calendar. It appears that they were decimated by an epidemic or some environmental catastrophe around 900 C.E. (12).

The Aztec civilization which descended from the arid north into Mexico, and inherited much of the knowledge of their predecessors had the unfortunate fate of meeting the Spanish conquistadors. They had built great pyramids, ruled over 25 million people, developed a

vast urban complex as large as any city in Europe and preserved their history in large libraries. One of the greatest crimes of European expansion, besides the genocide of millions of Native Americans was the destruction of the written records of all of the Native cultures that they encountered. Today, the historian is obliged to depend on archaeological finds, linguistics data, and rarely found written documentation.

4 - The Civilizations of South America

An old civilization flourished in the Peruvian highlands already at the turn of the first millennium B.C. At middle altitudes the inhabitants cultivated cotton, beans, squash and manioc, and at higher altitudes they planted white potatoes and quinoa. Already, the Amerindians of that period domesticated the alpaca for wool, the lima for wool, transport and meat, and the guinea pig for meat. The fishing industry was also well developed.

The first six centuries of the Christian era saw the growth of three centers of civilization : Tiahuanaco, around the shores of Lake Titicaca ; Chimu, near present day Trujillo, in Northern Peru ; and Nazca Valley, on the Southern coast of Peru. Their buildings, pottery and art achieved a high degree of excellence.

The genius of the Quechuas, commonly known as Incas after their kings, produced the best organized political and social system of pre-Columbian America. Their rule was established as earlier cultures declined. The Incas started as one of the Tiahuanaco Kingdoms. Across centuries of continuous efforts, they imposed their rule, language (Quechua) and religion (cult of the sun) on an empire extending over a large area of South America, including Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and parts of Chile and Argentina. Sinchi Roca (1105-1140) established control over the immediate vicinity of Cusco

and Pachacuti Inca Yupanqui (crowned in 1438 CE) was the first of a series of great emperors.

The fundamental unit of the Inca Empire was the ayllu, or tribe (note that in Arabic ayla means family). Laws have been enacted for the protection and the strengthening of the family and the fostering of collective agriculture, thus increasing the strength of the ayllu and its importance. The Incas assigned part of the lands given to each ayllu for the support of the cult of the sun, the State Religion of the Incas. Another part was cultivated for the Inca and his armies. The rest was kept by the ayllu to be distributed between its members, each married couple and each boy child receiving a tupu of land (600 m²), and each girl child receiving half a tupu. The ayllu worked also the lands allotted to the orphans, the aged and the poor.

The Ayllu became a standard Community Unit of a pachaca of 100 households. Smaller units were organized within the pachaca. The pachacas were grouped in the four "quarters" forming the Inca Empire, with a Viceroy in each quarter, elected from among the members of the imperial family. The sacred figure of the Inca (Emperor) stands on the top of the hierarchy. Thus, the Inca Empire was feudal and centralized with a well developed military system.

The Inca received the third of the products of the soil, monopolized the mining of precious stones and metals and collected taxes. He was both the head of state and religion.

The Incas paved highways, built bridges, established storehouses, inns and post houses on the roads. Inca runners carried messages swiftly in short relays. The architecture of the Incas was substantial and imposing, as could still be seen at Cusco, their capital, and in the nearby Machu Picchu. Inca pottery, gold, silver work and textiles were of the highest standards.

The religious system of the Incas included fasting, prayers, sacrifices, confession, penance and many elaborate ceremonies. A decimal system of numbers was invented and the knowledge of

astronomy was well developed. Schools for training nobility and priests flourished in Cusco and in Ollantay Eamba. Incas produced poetry, and a rich literature on history, drama and religious liturgy; all this civilization was destroyed mercilessly and savagely by the Spanish conquistadors.

On the high plateaux of Venezuela and Columbia and in the Isthmus of Chibchas, the Amerindians developed agriculture based on manioc root (cassava). These people lived in towns and developed a social and political organization similar to that of the Incas.

The Tupi Guarani of Paraguay and Brazil were a peaceful agricultural people just as the Charruas of Uruguay. Whereas most of Argentina was populated with Patagonians and other nomadic people who lived in harmony with their environment, Chile was the home of the Araucanians, an independent people who could not be subdued by the Incas.

All these nations have been practically exterminated by the Christian European onslaught.

5 – The Voyages of Andalucian and Moroccan Muslims

Ancient America was not isolated from the old world as many historians and anthropologists would have us believe. People from both sides of the Atlantic ocean traveled great distances, mingled with each other and exchanged knowledge and products. Long before Columbus became aware of the possibility of land in the west, Muslims among other people had made contact with the Americas and had already left an impression on the Native culture.

A number of linguists, historians, and archaeologists have postulated that Arabic speaking North African Muslims had made contact with the Americas in the 7th century C.E. They traced the journey of a North African explorer using a number of Lybian/Kufic inscriptions from the North African coast to the Red Sea, the Indian

Ocean, the South China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and into the Southwest of the present United States (3) (4). Inscriptions in Lybian or Kufic in the Americas have also claimed to have been found. Much work is left to be done in order to verify these claims. Because of the tentative nature of this valuable area of research and the difficulty in tracing the primary documentation and materials, this chapter will focus on the Muslim explorations of the Atlantic side.

Knowledge, agricultural products, livestock, metals, and other commercial items were exchanged between the two worlds. Evidence leading to the presence of Muslims in ancient America comes from a number of sculptures, oral traditions, eye-witness reports, artifacts, Arabic documents, coins, and inscriptions.

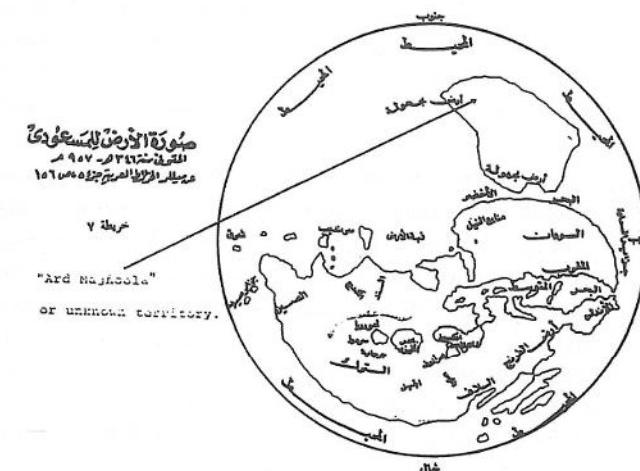
A report in Before Columbus by Cyrus Gordon describes coins found in the southern Caribbean region : off the coast of Venezuela was discovered a hoard of Mediterranean coins with so many duplicates that it cannot well be a numismatist's collection but rather a supply of cash. Nearly all the coins are Roman, from the reign of Augustus to the 4th century C.E. Two of the coins however, are Arabic of the 8th century C.E. It is the latter that gives us the terminus a quo (i.e. time after which) of the collection as a whole (which cannot be earlier than the latest coins in the collection). Roman coins continued in use as currency into the medieval times. A Moorish ship, perhaps from Spain or North Africa seems to have crossed the Atlantic around 800 C.E. (15).

The discovery of these coins adds validity to the reports recorded by Muslim historians and geographers concerning the journeys of Muslim adventurers and navigators across the Atlantic ocean. In Muruj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar (The Meadows of Gold and Quarries of Jewels) written around the year 956 C.E., Abul Hasan 'Ali ibn al-Husain ibn 'Ali al-Mas'udi, an historian, geographer, philosopher, and natural scientist, wrote about a young man of Cordoba named Khashkhash ibn Saeed ibn Aswad who crossed the

Atlantic Ocean, made contact with people on the other side, and returned in the year 889 C.E. Al-Mas'udi wrote :

Some people feel that this ocean is the source of all oceans and in it there have been many strange happenings. We have reported some of them in our book Akhbar az-Zaman. Adventurers have penetrated it on the risk of their lives, some returning safely, others perishing in the attempt. One such man was an inhabitant of Andalusia named Khashkhash. He was a young man of Cordoba who gathered a group of young men and went on a voyage on this ocean. After a long time, he returned with a fabulous booty. Every Andalusian knows his story (16).

Al-Mas'udi was aware of the existence of a continent beyond the Atlantic Ocean. In his map of the world he referred to it as "Ard Majhoola" (unknown territory) – (See Appendix 2).



This picture of Al Masudi's map was extracted from Atlas of the History of Islam by Dr. Hussain Mones (Al Zahraa for Arab Mass Media, Cairo - 1987).

Note: Turn map upside down to see actual position.

Appendix 2

A narration by Abu Bakr ibn 'Umar al-Qutiyah (not to be confused with the author of Tarikh Iftitah al-Andalus, Ibn al-Qutiyah) relates the story of Ibn Farrukh who landed in February 999 C.E. in Gando (Great Canary), visited King Guanariga and continued his journey westwards till he found islands he called Capraria and Pluitana. In May of that year he arrived back in The Ibeman Peninsula, in Andalucia (17).

Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad al-Idrisi (1099-1180), the famous Arab physician and geographer who established himself in the Arabicized court of King Roger II of Sicily, reported in his extensive work *Kitab al-Mamalik wa-l-Masalik*, in the 12th century, on the journey of a group of seamen who reached the isles of the Americas. Al-Idrisi wrote :

A group of seafarers sailed into the sea of darkness and fog (the Atlantic Ocean) from Lisbon in order to discover what was in it and to what extent were its limits. They were a party of eight and they took a boat which was loaded with supplies to last them for months. They sailed for eleven days till they reached turbulent waters with great waves and little light. They thought that they would perish so they turned their boat southward and traveled for twelve days. They finally reached an Island that had people and civilization but they were captured and chained for three days. On the fourth day, a translator came speaking the Arabic language ! He translated for the King and asked them about their mission. They informed him about themselves, then they were returned to their confinement. When the westerly wind began to blow, they were put in a canoe, blindfolded, and brought to land after three days sailing. They were left on the shore with their hands tied behind their backs. When the next day came, another tribe appeared, freeing them and informing them that between them and their lands was a journey of two months (18).

This astonishing historical report not only describes contact between Muslim seamen and the Native people of the Americas, but it also describes travel between islands, probably the Bahamas chain or the lesser Antilles. The people on the islands had developed the ability to communicate in Arabic, a language that cannot be mastered by a single contact. They must have been regularly visited by Arabic speaking Muslim merchants or adventurers or had lived in a Muslim territory.

A map of Florida, based on a French expedition in 1564 shows three names that demonstrate an earlier Muslim settlement in that area. They were written as follows :

Mayarca (Majorca)
Cadicia (Cadiz)
Marracou (Marrakesh) (19)

How could these names have been used by the people if they had not made contact with North African or Andalucian Muslims ?

6 - The Ottoman Muslim Map Makers

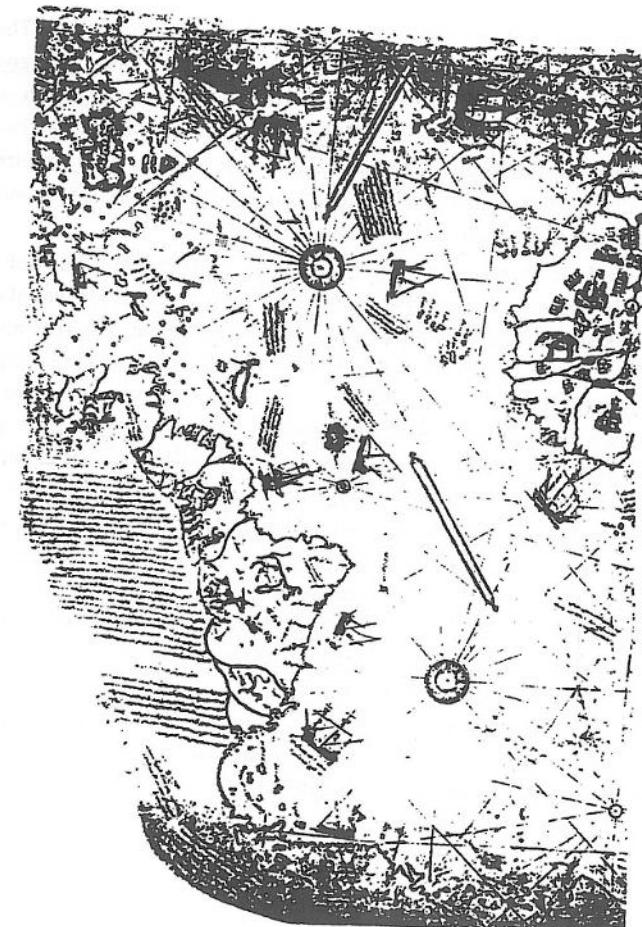
In October, 1929 C.E., Khalid Edhem Bey discovered by chance in the library of Serallo, in the city of Istanbul, a map in parchment made in the month of Muharram of the year 919 A.H. (March, 1513). The rare and valuable geographical letter contained, among other legends, the following note :

This chapter explains how this map has been made. Such a map nobody owns at present. By the hands of this poor man it has been composed and now elaborated.

The discovery was very significant. As already stated it had to do with a parchment in Turkish writing, painted in several colours, with dimensions 0.85 x 0.60. It comprises the Atlantic Ocean with America and the western rim of the world. The other parts of the world, which the map probably included, have been lost, (see Appendix 3) (20).

The author of the map, Piri Muhy-id-Din Re'is was a famous navigator and mapmaker who died about 1554-55 C.E. He wrote a handbook on navigation in the Aegean and the Mediterranean Seas, which was known as *Piri Re'is Bahriye*. Perhaps the map found by Khalil Edhem Bey was part of this handbook which had been presented to Sultan Selim I in 1517 C.E., which would explain how

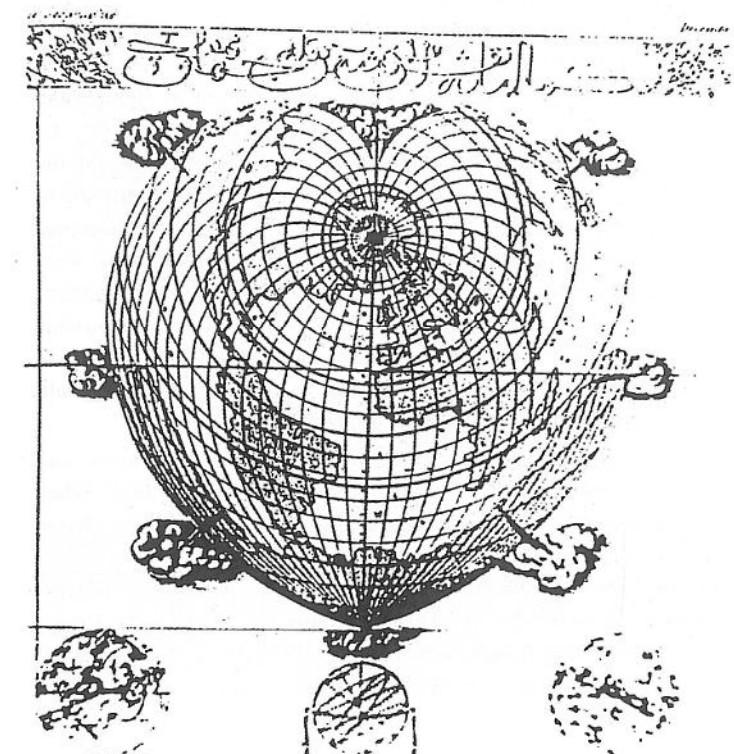
the mysterious parchment was found in Serallo. What is most important to this study, however, is that this map is one of the most conclusive pieces of hard evidence to show the validity of Muslim exploration in the Western hemisphere. Piri Re'is, a Turkish navigator, wrote that he used twenty source maps ; among them eight maps dating from the time of Alexander the Great, an Arab map of the India, four Portuguese maps of the Indian Ocean and China, and a map by Columbus of the western area. But Piri's map contains information that could not have been known by Columbus. It contains the correct relative longitude across Africa, and across the Atlantic, all the way from the meridian of Alexandria, Egypt, to Brazil. The mid-Atlantic islands are shown with remarkable accuracy. The Cape Verde islands, Madeira, and the Azores are shown in perfect longitude. The Canary Islands are off by one degree longitude. The Andes are shown on this map in 1513. The Andes were not visited by Christian Europeans until 1527 with the coming of Pizarro. The Atrato river (in present day Columbia) is shown for a distance of 300 miles from the



Appendix 3

sea. Its eastward bend at 5 degrees North latitude is correct. The Amazon is shown twice, once on the equator of the main grid and once on the equator of the small grid. The island of Marajo is shown at the mouth of the Amazon, but this island was not officially visited by Christian Europeans until 1543 C.E. Someone must have traveled throughout the upper part of South America exploring rivers and recording information (21).

The Haji Ahmed map of 1559 C.E., also supports the validity of a Muslim presence in the Americas long before Columbus. He was also a Turkish mapmaker who, in the tradition of Islamic scientists and technicians of his age, benefited from the knowledge of the ancient Egyptians, Hindus, Greeks, Romans, and Phonecians, and took it to a higher level of development. Muslims had led the world in Astronomy, Mathematics, Chemistry, Medicine, History, Geography, Navigation, etc. for hundreds of years before the sixteenth century and Haji Ahmed followed in their footsteps. The eastern hemisphere, on his map, is poorly done and probably was based on the sources of Ptolemy. The western side, however, was mapped so well that it is hard to believe that anyone who did not have access to maps of people who had been well traveled in the Americas could have drawn this map. The shapes of North and South America are surprisingly modern, especially the western coasts. Their drawing on a highly sophisticated spherical projection puts the map about two centuries ahead of cartography of that time (see Appendix 4) (22).



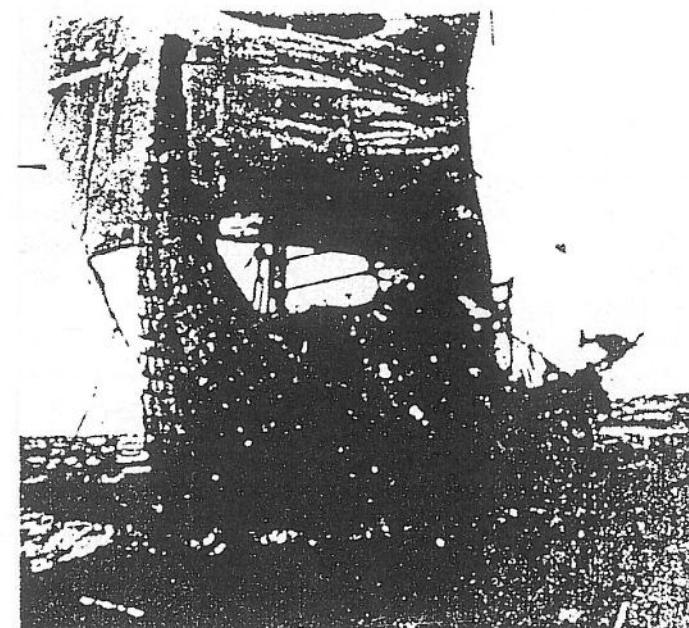
The Hadji Ahmed World Map of 1559. (3:85)

Appendix 4

7 - African Muslims Voyages and Exploration

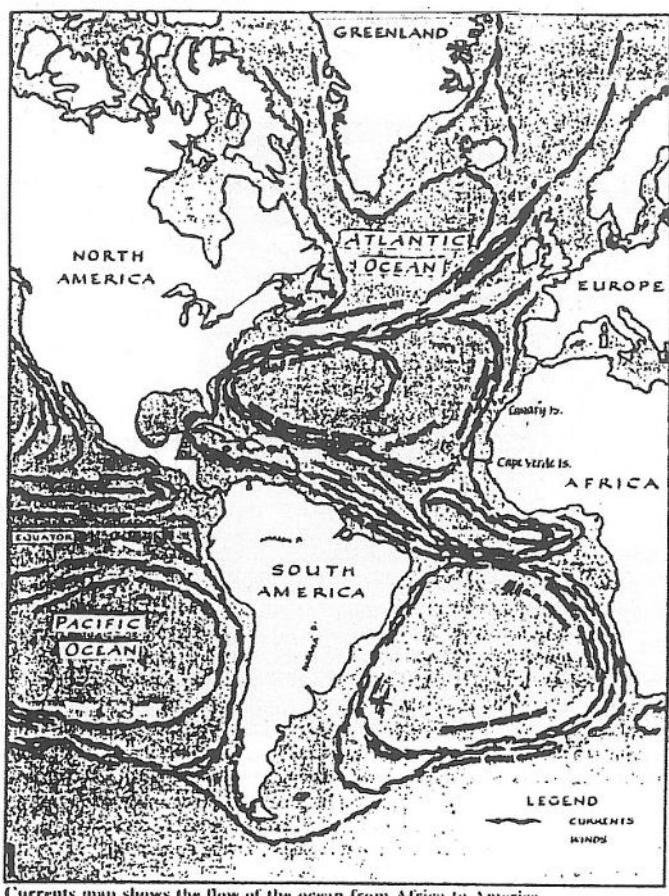
Anti-diffusionist scholars have countered earlier claims to a pre-Columbian presence in the Americas by casting doubt on the nautical ability of Muslim European or African seamen, and by sighting the difficulty of crossing the Atlantic Ocean. In 1969 C.E., the Scandinavian scientist, Thor Hyerdhal crossed the Atlantic for the second time starting from the North African port, Safi, and arriving in Barbados, West Indies. His craft was made by Africans of indigenous papyrus, thereby proving that not only could North African or West African sailors have crossed the Atlantic Ocean, but even the ancient Egyptians (See Appendix 5). It is now well known that the currents coming off the Iberian Peninsula and western coastline of Africa will take a ship easily into the Caribbean or the east coast of South America (present day Brazil) (See Appendix 6).

One of the most significant waves of Muslim explorers and merchants came from the West African Islamic Empire of Mali. When Mansa Musa, the world renowned ruler of Mali was enroute to Mecca, during his famous Pilgrimage in 1324 C.E., he informed the governor of Cairo that his predecessor had undertaken two expeditions into the Atlantic Ocean in order to discover its limits. Shihab al-Din al-'Umari, a famous Arab geographer, in his *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar* reported from his informant the following :



The Ra II built by Africans in 1969 crossed from Safi, North Africa, to Barbados in the Caribbean, using power and the direction of the currents and trade winds.

Appendix 5



Appendix 6

I asked the Sultan Musa, says Ibn Amir Hajib, how it was that power came into his hands. "We are, he told me, from a house that transmits power by heritage. The ruler who preceded me would not believe that it was impossible to discover the limits of the neighboring sea. He wanted to find out and persisted in his plan. He had two hundred ships equipped and filled with men, and others in the same number filled with gold, water, and supplies in sufficient quantity to last for years. He told those who commanded them : "Return only when you have reached the extremity of the ocean, or when you have exhausted your food and water. They went away, their absence was long, before any them returned. Finally, a sole ship re-appeared. We asked the captain about their adventures.

"Prince, he replied, we sailed for a long time, up to the moment when we encountered in mid-ocean something like a river with a violent current. My ship was last. The others sailed on, and gradually as each one entered this place, they disappeared and did not come back. We did not know what had happened to them. As for me, I returned to where I was and did not enter the current".

But the emperor did not want to believe him. He equipped two thousand vessels, a thousand for himself and the men who accompanied him and a thousand for water and supplies. He conferred power on me and left with his companions on the ocean. This was the last time that I saw him and the others, and I remained the absolute master of the empire. (23).

This report reveals that the Mandinka monarch made great preparation for the journey and had confidence in its success. His captain, who reported the violent river in the mid-Atlantic, must have encountered a mid-ocean current, but as the report shows us, he had little difficulty returning to the West African coast. This current was either the North Equatorial or the Antilles Current, either of whose

distances from the West African coast at that latitude would place the fleet at the doorstep of the Americas. (24) (25) (26).

Examination of inscriptions found in Brazil and Peru, and the United States as well as linguistic, cultural and archaeological finds offer documented evidence of the presence of these Mandinka Muslims in the early Americas. The Mandinka made contact with Brazil, the closest land mass to the West African Guinea coast. They appear to have used it as a base of exploration of the Americas. They traveled along rivers in the dense jungles of South America and moved overland till they reached Central America. Examination of inscriptions found in Brazil at Bahia and Minas Gerais and on the coast of Peru at Ylo reveal a definite presence of these African Muslims. The inscriptions were taken from ancient cities and stone tablets and were originally written in the Vai and related Manding scripts (27) (28).

Many of the Mandinka cities of stone and mortar have been reclaimed by the jungle but a large number of these cities were seen by the early Spanish explorers and bandeiristas (land pirates) (29) (30) (31). One of these bandeiristas, a native of Minas Gerais, has provided many examples of the Mandinka script and description of the cities in the interior of Brazil. In a document, written in 1754, we are informed that a city in Minas Gerais near a river, was well laid out and had superb buildings, obelisks, and statues. On the statue of a young man, naked from the waist up without a beard, underneath the shield, were the following characters :

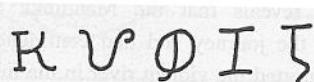


Fig.1: Transliteration : "Ahn-na we-fe-nge"; Translation : (He is of the) maternal aunt, the pure side, or in other words : He is the heir to the throne. (32).

In another part of the city, in a building probably used as a storehouse, the land pirates found the following characters :

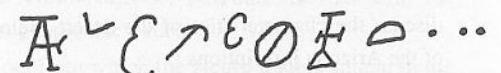


Fig.2: Transliteration : "Si-kye-du-nde-pe ?"; Translation : There are abundant wild kidney beans fastened (in) small jars and thrust in a hole (or hiding place). (33).

From Brazil, these Muslim explorers went to the west and the north. They left Brazil and traveled to Lake Titicaca (in present day Bolivia) where they were attacked. Many of these bearded explorers were killed but they left a legacy of writing among the Indians of the Koaty island of Lake Titicaca. Their ideograms are the same as the Manding inscriptions. The South American expeditions went as far as the Pacific coast, where on a rock on the shore near Ylo, are written the following characters :



Fig.3 : Transliteration : "Kye. Ngbe-gyo gbe-su. Kye-ngbe-ta-wonde."; Translation : Man : To pursue worship, to mature, and become matter without life. Man pursues a cavernous place (i.e. a grave or hole in the ground) (34).

It appears that the Mandinka explorers under the Mansa's instructions explored Central America and parts of the United States. This is evident from linguistic findings and the appearance of mounds throughout the United States, especially in the vicinity of the Mississippi river, which they must have used as central waterway for exploring America.

In Arizona, they left inscriptions which show that the Mandinka explorers also brought a number of elephants to America with them. Writings and pictographs found in a cave at Four Corners, Arizona discuss the characteristics of the desert. Below are the first two lines of the Arizona inscriptions :

Fig.4 :

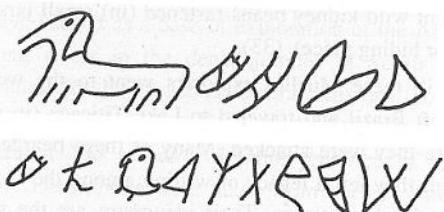


Fig.5 :

1. Transliteration : "ga-gya kpa-nde-ngbe-ka-go-ne" Translation : The desert is hot. Birds are numerous white...(ka)...and called "go".
2. Transliteration : "Elephant (picture)-ga-ka. Bi-kpa" Translation : The elephants are sick and angry. At present sick elephants are considerable. (35).

8 – The Witness of early Christian European Explorers

In 1920, a renowned American historian and linguist named Leo Weiner of Harvard University, wrote a controversial book entitled Africa and the Discovery of America. He tried to prove in it that Columbus was well aware of the African, Muslim presence in the Americas. He based his argument on linguistic, agricultural, and cultural finds that he made in his study of the Native people of America and the writings of the early European explorers. This early twentieth century work came as a surprise to many of the historians of America, but on examination of the actual writings of the European

explorers clear proof of their actual understanding is revealed. Weiner showed through his research that the early Mandinka not only penetrated Central and North America, but inter-married with the Iroquois and Algonquian people. He wrote :

There were several foci from which the Negro traders spread in the two Americas. The eastern part of South America, where the Caribs are mentioned, seems to have been reached by them from the West Indies. Another stream, possibly from the same focus, radiated to the north along roads marked by the presence of mounds and reached as far as Canada. (36).

Columbus had recorded the fact that Africans were trading with the Americas. In the Narrative of the Third Voyage, he wrote :

Certain principal inhabitants of the island of Santiago came to see him, and they said that to the south-west of the island of Huego, which is one of the Cape Verdes, distant twelve leagues from this, may be seen an island, and that the King Don Juan was greatly inclined to send to make discoveries to the south-west and that canoes had been found which start from the coast of Guinea and navigate to the west with merchandises. (37).

Las Casas later wrote about Columbus saying :

That after he would navigate, the Lord pleasing, to the west, and from there would go to this Espanola in which route he would prove the theory of the King John, aforesaid :

and that he thought to investigate the report of the Indians of the Espanola (Haiti) who said that there had come to Espanola from the south and the south-east, a black people who have the tops of their spears made of a metal which they call "guanin" of which he had sent samples to the Sovereigns to have them assayed, when it was found that of 32 parts, 18 were of gold, 6 of silver and 8 of copper. (38).

In Panama, the Mandinka, African Muslims had such an effect on the populace that they are classified as part of the indigenous people

of the area. One expert of Central American traditions, L'Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg, wrote :

It is thus that today we distinguish the indigenous people of Darien (Panama) under two names, the Mandingas and the Tule, whose difference perhaps recalls their distinct origins. (39).

In 1513 C.E., when Vasco Nunez de Balboa, the Spanish explorer, reached Panama, he and his party discerned the presence of African people. One of the recorders of the travels of Balboa, Gomara, wrote :

When Balboa entered the Province of Quareca, he found no gold but some black slaves belonging to the King of the place. Having asked the King where he obtained these slaves, he (Balboa) received as an answer that people of that color lived quite near to there and that they were constantly at war with them...These Blacks were entirely like the Blacks of Guinea. (40).

Another recorder of Balboa, Peter Martyr, left an account that adds to our knowledge of this discovery. He stated :

We found there (in Quareco), black slaves, having come from a region a distance of only two days march, and which produces people of that color, fierce, and above all cruel. It is believed that such Blacks came long ago from Africa with the intention of robbing and that, having shipwrecked, established residence in those mountains. (41).

Writing on the same period, Rodrigo de Colmenares, in his Memorial against Balboa, wrote :

...a captain brought news of a black people located east of the Gulf of San Miguel-'i que habia alli cerca gente negra...(42).

The reports of Martyr and Colmenares, although being biased in their judgement of the purpose of the African exploratory voyages, are amazingly clear in their tracing of the African presence. This type of obvious reporting at such an early date in European colonial history cannot be attributed to shipwrecked slaves for the European colonies were not established by that time. Carlos Marquez, correlating archaeological finds with traditional native history, wrote :

Some tribes of Darien say that when for the first time their ancestors arrived in that region, it was occupied by small black men who later retired to the forests ; and the Payas and the Tapalisa, or the Cunacunas, having their origin date back to one man and two women-one Indian and the other Black, who lived on the shores of the Tartarcuna. (43).

From Panama, the Mandinka explorers travelled north to Honduras. Ferdinand Columbus, the son of Christopher Columbus, recorded the presence of black people seen by his father in northern Honduras. He wrote :

...But the people who live farther east (of Pointe Cavinas) as far as Cape Gracioso a Dios, are almost black in color... They pierce hole in their ears large enough to insert hen's eggs. (44)

Piercing the ears and hanging heavy earrings is an ancient West African (especially Manding) custom among women. Mali was of course, one of the richest gold producing areas in the world.

To the southwest, near the Nicaraguan border at Tegulcigalpa, another group of Blacks were reported, possibly by Columbus. They were known as "Jaras and Guaba". (45). These names appear to be the same Jarra in Gambia, Diara in Senegal and Mali, which represent a very ancient clan and territorial designation among the Mandinka-Sarakoles. Kangaba, one of the ancient capitals of Mali kings, has frequently been shortened to Ka-ba ; furthermore, Niani, another famous Malian capital, sometimes called Mali, after the empire, contained a district within its walls called "Niani Kaba". The use of these names are another part of the legacy left by the early explorers. Both Kaba and Diara are still in use in West Africa and Central America today.

Some of the Muslim Africans of Honduras called themselves "Almamys" prior to the coming of the Spanish to Central America. They were probably related to the Africans seen by Ferdinand Columbus, or the Jaras and Guabas of Tegulcigalpa. Giles Cauvet in

Les Berbères de l'Amérique while making an ethnographic comparison between Africa and America stated : a tribe of Almamys inhabited Honduras...having preceded by a little the arrival of Columbus there.

He also added that the title Almamy does not antedate the 12th century of the Christian era, which is the earliest date the black African Muslims would have been conveyed to the American Isthmus. (46). In the Manding language "Almamy" was the designation of "Al-Imamu", from the Arabic "Al-Imam", the leader of the prayer or in some cases, the chief of the community.

Other evidences of early pre-Columbian presence in the Americas are found in the writings of Manuel Orozco y Berra (*Historia antigua y de la conquista de Mexico*) who traces early colonies of black people living in Central America and the southeastern parts of America. Father Francisco Garcés in 1775 ran across a race of black people living beside the Zuni Indians in new Mexico. A. de Quarefages in *Introduction à L'Etude des Races Humaines*, noted that the Indians and Blacks spoke different languages, and according to the Indians they were the earliest inhabitants of the lands. (47).

Alexander Von Wuthenau, professor of Art History at Mexico City College from 1939-1965 was instrumental in the collection and display of a series of terracotta figures, masks, pottery, and other items which represent the many people who have visited the Americas before Columbus. His collection of actual materials from the period of Mandinka exploration gives us a graphic look at the faces of the people, themselves. Note in Appendix 7, 8, and 9, the clear African features, facial scarification, and Islamic turban. (48). Time and the search for truth are slowly bringing these faces back to life.



Appendix 7

Superb Moorish-looking clay sculpture. Veracruz Classic. Height 16 cm. Note the scarification tattooing and the turban on this most evidential piece of historical value.



Appendix 8



Appendix 9

9 - African Gold Trade

The early Mandinka explorers who traveled with the Mansa of the empire of Mali or on subsequent voyages were without a doubt carrying large amounts of gold with them. On the famous pilgrimage of Mansa Musa, previously mentioned, the Malian Muslims were carrying so much gold with them that they seriously affected the economy of every land they passed through. The gold trade with the Americas is established through gold analysis, linguistic findings, and eyewitness reports.

In the description of Columbus, previously mentioned, it was recorded that the Indians called gold "guanin". The gold was found to be of 32 parts, 18 were of gold, 6 of silver, and 8 of copper. This was a common West African gold alloy which had identical proportions of silver and copper and dated back to at least the thirteenth century. William Bowsman who spent fourteen years in West Africa before 1705, noted that gold is frequently mixed with a third part, and sometimes with half silver and copper. He found that this "artificial" gold was found all along the Guinea coast, (49). Columbus was well aware of the West African gold for not only did it have a certain alloy but it even carried a peculiar odor.(50).

Linguistic research has uncovered a number of words having an Arabic or West African root and being found in the Native languages of the Caribbean and North America. The following are a few of the similarities :

Antillean (American)	Mandinka	English
goana, caona, guani,	Ghana (Arabic: Ghani),	gold
guanin	Kane, Kani, Kanine, Ghanin	

nucay, nozay	Nege, nexe, (nuh-kuh)	metal, iron or gold jewelry
tuob, tumbaga	saba, tubab, tobauto Mansa	gold, a gold weight, a King's title (51).

The African gold words have an affinity to words that are used to describe gold, wealth, and riches. *Gha-naa* (غنا) means wealth ; *ghaneemah* (غنية) means spoils or booty ; *ghanee* (غنى) means rich. These words are similar to *ghana* and *guanin*. Also, *nuqud* (نقود) means money or coins ; *nuhaas* (نجايس) means copper ; *naqiy* (نقبي) means pure, clean. They are similar to *nucay* and *nuhkuh*. *Tibr* (تنبر) means raw metal, gold nuggets. This is similar to *tuob* and *tubab*. Father Roman (Ramon Pane), one of the first twelve missionaries to visit the Americas after Columbus stated that the African gold merchants who came to Hispaniola were called "Black Guanini". (52).

10 - African Cotton Trade

Gold was not the only item that the early Mandinka explorers probably brought with them. Columbus was surprised to find the Native people of the Americas battering in a woven cloth, identical in design and style to that which he had seen in West Africa. In the Journal of the Third Voyages, he noted that the Indians "brought handkerchiefs of cotton, very symmetrically woven and worked in colors like those brought from Guinea, from the rivers of Sierra Leone, and of no difference". He was so startled by this "discovery"

that he remarked, "but they (the Indians) cannot communicate with the latter (West Africans), because from here to Guinea is a distance of more than 800 leagues (2,400 miles)". (53). Columbus made several references to "almaizar", a cloth the Moors (Spanish or North African Muslims) imported from West Africa into Morocco, and Andalucia. (54).

Ferdinand Columbus called the Native cotton garments "breechcloths of the same design and cloth as the shawls worn by the Moorish women of Grenada". (55). Hernan Cortes, another infamous Spanish conqueror described the dress of the Indians as follows :

The clothing which they wear is like long veils, very curiously worked. The men wear breechcloths about their bodies, and large mantles, very thin, and painted in the style of Moorish draperies. (56).

The "Moorish" usage here could have directly applied to the West African Mandinka Muslims also, as many of the same dress and cultural styles were shared throughout Muslim Andalucia, North and west Africa. As early as the eleventh century, the town of Silla on the Senegal River was a trading post under the control of the Empire of Ghana and used millet, salt, copper rings, gold, cowry shells, euphorbium and cotton breechcloths as currency. Al-Bakri reports that "almost every house had a cotton tree" and cotton was one of the most important mediums of exchange. (57).

Just as the trade in cotton goods was important in the Muslim World, it was also employed as a currency in the Caribbean and Central America. The consistent surprise and testimony of the Christian European explorers as to the remarkable similarity between the designs and the usage is just another proof of the connection of the two worlds.

Many more clear proofs would have probably been easily found among the native populations had it not been for the Spanish "scorched earth" policy of destroying all of the writings and remnants of the Native culture.

11 – The Garifuna People : Descendants of the Early Mandinka

Another part of the pre-Columbian stolen legacy that has been coming to light in the past few years is the origin of the Garifuna people, sometimes known as Black Caribs. The Carib people are usually identified with the Native (Indian) group that populates parts of South America and the Caribbean. It is from their name that we derive the word "Caribbean". P.V. Ramos in an article that appeared in the Daily Clarion of Belize, Central America, on November 5, 1946 wrote :

When Columbus discovered the West Indies about the year 1493 C.E., he found there a race of white people (i.e. half breeds) with wooly hair whom he called Caribs. They were seafaring hunters and tillers of the soil, peaceful and united. They hated aggression. Their religion was Mohammedanism (Islam) and their language presumably Arabic. (58).

The Black Caribs have maintained their own language and a set of rituals and cultural practices. The British Honduras Handbook states that the Black Carib" are very clannish and speak a language of their own which they guard jealously. It appears to be basically an African dialect with a strong admixture of French, Spanish, and English words. (59).

Many European scholars have tried to argue that the Black Caribs, as a distinct group, were formed as a result of African slaves mixing with the Native Indians of St. Vincent Island in the Caribbean region, and later being transported to Honduras by the British. A. Quatrefages, in his work, *Histoire Générale des Races Humaines* observed the following :

When the Europeans landed on this latter island (St.Vincent), they found there two populations, or better two distinct races. One part of the island had the ordinary reddish-yellow complexion ; the others were Blacks. In order to explain this latter peculiarity, one has

generally admitted that a ship carrying slaves had been wrecked on these shores and that the Blacks set free, in this manner, mixed in with the ancient inhabitants. It is possible that this hypothesis is true, but not necessarily the reason which explains the formation of this mixed race. It would appear more probable that the colour of the Black Caribs holds the same analogical causes which gave rise to the complexion which characterises the Charuas and the Yamassee. They (the Black Caribs) could very well be the descendants of the Africans who were convoyed to St. Vincent by the currents and winds, such as was in the case of those who landed towards the mouth of Orinoco, in Brazil, in Florida, and at the Isthmus of Darien. They might even be the descendants of those Black men, who during the time of Columbus were from time to time making incursions to Haïti, well before slavery had brought Negroes to America. It is useless to return on the manner which might have given birth to this population that Herrera cited by Brasseur (de Bourbourg), calls *quento negra* and which he clearly distinguished from the Caribs whom he called *Caribales*. (60).

The Black Caribs (Garifuna) had a number of clearly Islamic-based practices. They did not eat the flesh of swine, in any form, although they were aware of its food value. In fact, they had instituted among themselves a complete prohibition and taboo, calling it *coin-coin* or *bouirokou*. They ate no crab or lizard while out at sea for fear of not returning to land. (61). The Handbook of South American Indians describes the Black Caribs with the following :

The most prized possession of the (Carib) men was the *Caracoli*, a crescent-shaped alloy of gold and copper framed in wood, which the warriors obtained during raids upon the continental (South American) Arawak. Some of the *Caracoli* were small and served as ear, nose, or mouth pendants ; others were large enough to be worn on the chest. They were a sign of high rank, being passed down from generation to generation, and worn only upon a ceremonial occasion and during journeys. (62).

The Garifuna also have maintained a strong sense of family, sexual morality, and belief in One Creator. In the past ten years, they have become a more out-spoken group of indigenous Caribbean people. They are now found especially along the Caribbean coastline of Central America. In Belize and Honduras, a number of Garifuna have come back openly to the fold of Islam and simple masjids are being constructed all along the coast. Much has yet to be done in order to trace the actual root of their African language.

The present author while touring Belize and delivering a lecture on "African/Muslim presence in the Americas before Columbus" in 1992, witnessed the re-acceptance of Islam of a number of Garifuna and visited their masjids along the coast.

12 - Conclusion

After surveying the growing number of archaeological, linguistic, and historical proofs for the presence of Muslims in the Americas before Columbus, the researcher becomes totally aware of a massive cover up. Not only was the knowledge of the presence of Muslims in the Americas known by the early Spanish and Portuguese explorers, but Muslim geographical and navigational information actually was the foundation of the European expansion. Vasco da Gama is reported to have consulted with Ahmad Ibn Majid on the West coast of Africa. Ibn Majid is regarded as the author of a handbook on navigation on the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Southern China, and the waters around the West Indies. (63).

In actuality, the whole colonization of the Americas by the Spanish was an extension of the so-called Reconquista (reconquest) of the Iberian Peninsula Andalusian. Muslims had ruled much of Spain for over 700 years, dominating Europe culturally, educationally, and economically. The early explorers were, in many cases, Spanish soldiers who had fought in Spain or Africa and sailed the seas to

destroy the power of Islam. They recognized the influence of Islam wherever they journeyed and did everything in their power to convert the people to Catholicism. When Hernan Cortes (conqueror of Mexico) arrived in the Yucatan, he named the area "El Cairo" (64). The men of Cortes and Juan Pizarro (conqueror of Peru), some of whom had taken direct part in the struggle against Muslims, called the Indian temples "Mezquitas" (Spanish for masjid). (65). By a rare paradox, the first Christian to see the American land, Rodrigo de Triana or Rodrigo de Lepe, on his return to Spain became a Muslim, abandoning his Christian allegiance. Columbus did not give him any credit, nor the King any recompense. (66).

Such was the plight of the early Muslims who braved the currents, visited new lands, learned new languages and cultures, traded with the peoples of the Americas, and became part of the already thriving civilizations. Yet despite all of these amazing achievements, very little information about their presence is being filtered out to the general public. World History will one day open its arms to all of its participants.

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CHAPTER II

Islam in Canada

by

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- 1- Introduction 2- Canada's Religious Spectrum 3- Advent and Spread of Islam in Canada 4- Conversions to Islam in Canada 5- Demographics of Canadian Muslims 6- Economic Life of Canadian Muslims 7- Muslim Community Organization in Canada 8- Muslim Religious Institutions in Canada 9- Muslim Educational Institutions in Canada 10- Muslim Social Institutions in Canada 11 - Future Trends 12- Conclusions - Notes

1. Introduction

Canada is a young country, vast in area (9,215,430 Km²) and rich in linguistic and cultural diversity. Its 27 million people represent well over one hundred ethno cultural heritages and a variety of faiths and beliefs. Sixteen per cent of the residents of Canada are immigrants and many more are the descendants of immigrants. Thirty-eight per cent of the population of Canada's largest city, Toronto, was born abroad, and Montreal is the second largest French-speaking city in the world.

Over the years, Immigrants have come to Canada to run away from famines, escape racial or ideological intolerance, flee religious and political persecution, and to seek a better living in the country rated the best in the world by the United Nations. They have also brought with them their customs and nomenclatures, arts and cultures and their beliefs and faiths. Indeed, they have their own visions of Canada - visions kindled by their aspirations, molded by their legacies and tempered by their experiences.

The Canadian society has evolved through the interaction of these numerous groups. Immigrants, in adapting to the Canadian society and culture, contribute to, and change it. And all, established citizens and newcomers alike, participate in the adjustment process. Since culture is the made up of the contribution - great and small - of those adjusting to it, we can denigrate particular ethnic elements only at the risk of impoverishing the culture as a whole.

In keeping with this spirit, Canada has chosen to be a mosaic, not a melting pot. Diversity is acknowledged and appreciated and looked upon as an asset to enrich our heritage. Our laws and institutions ensure that the individuals not only have the freedom to belong to any religion and culture but also be able to exercise that choice without feeling inferior. Freedoms are enshrined in the Constitution, institutions are in place to ensure them and enforceable standards of behavior have been legislated to protect against systemic discrimination,

Such is the framework in which Muslims seek to forge a cohesive community. While Canada offers the host environment of any country to do so, the immensity of the task is not lost on Muslims. Social values and the behaviourial pattern of the Canadian society, its economic, financial and social institutions and the legal system are very different - diametrically in some instances. To wit, the Canadian society is changing rapidly. The feminist movement, advances in reproductive technologies, surrogate, motherhood, homosexual rights, new forms of family, the debate on when life begins and when death occurs, the right-to-die movement, recognition by courts of children's right to separate from their parents - all challenge the lifestyle, established conventions and institutions. Many of the changes raise complex ethical and legal questions and some are in direct conflict with Muslim beliefs.

There are challenges from within as well. The ethnic diversity poses the question whether Muslims want to be a community of

different cultures and ethnic backgrounds or a community of Canadians with a common culture in the tradition of early Muslim travelers, merchants and scholars who adapted the culture of the countries where they settled. They also need to reconcile the world of immigrant parents with the world of their children's peers, the two worlds often in conflict, seldom in communication. Equally important is the delineation of the role of the imam as the religious leader vis-à-vis the community leaders in forging the identity.

As Muslims confront these challenges, there are no precedents to guide and few parallels by which to measure the progress. Never before did a Muslim community living in a non-Muslim society have to come to grips with so many crucial questions over such a short period of time. The stakes are high for how the Muslims conduct themselves in this vastly different and rapidly changing environment will set precedents for other Muslim communities living in non-Muslim societies as well as for predominantly Muslim societies when and if they reach a similar stage of scientific development and social change.

2 – Canada's Religious Spectrum

Religion has played a very important part in Canada's history and development. Even today, the influence of Christianity is easily recognizable in its institutions, notwithstanding secularism.

Most Canadians are affiliated with a formal religion. According to the 1991 census, 83 per cent of the 27 million Canadians belong to various Christian churches. Slightly less than 13 per cent profess no religion but believe in God, including a few thousand free thinkers, humanists, agnostics and atheists. The Jews account for 1.2 per cent and Muslims 0.9 per cent. The remaining 2 per cent belong to numerous other religions.

Canada's religious make-up is changing. Three definite patterns have emerged over the last two decades. For the first time in 1971, the Catholics outnumbered Protestants and have since remained the largest religious group, accounting for 46 per cent of the population in 1991. By comparison, the number of Protestants has dropped : in the 1980's, the United Church experienced a decline of 18 per cent in its followers ; the number of Anglicans dropped by 10 per cent and there were 22 per cent fewer Presbyterians in 1991 than in 1981. Secondly, secularism is on the rise. Many Canadians appear to be ambivalent towards the church, supporting it as an institution but questioning the personalities in control. The number of people not belonging to any church, including a small number of atheists and agnostics, nearly doubled to 3.4 million in 1991. Combined with those who are affiliated with the church but rarely or never attend church services, they account for 37 per cent of the adult population (1). Thirdly, Islam is the fastest growing religion, and there is no doubt that by the end of this century it will have the second largest following after Christianity.

3 – Advent and Spread of Islam in Canada

Islam is not new to Canada nor is it confined to certain ethnic groups. The Muslims lived here even before the inception of the Canadian nationhood in 1867. The documented history of Muslims in Canada goes back to the mid 19th century (2). The year 1854 marked the birth of the first Canadian-born Muslim. Named James after his father, he was the first of eight children - three daughters and five sons - of James and Agnes Love, a young couple of Scottish ancestry. At the time of the birth of their youngest child, Alexander, in 1868, they were still very young - Agnes 31 years old and her husband James 38 years - and could have borne more children. This part of the Muslim history of Canada remains to be explored.

Another couple, John and Martha Simon, described as "Mohammedans" in government documents circa 1871, came from the United States and settled in Ontario. They were the oldest (in age) Muslim settlers in Canada. John Simon was born in 1800 and his wife Martha in 1817 in the United States. They were of English and French descent respectively. It is not clear when they migrated to Canada. Nor do we know at this stage whether the Simons had any children. The absence of any mention of children in the documents suggests several possibilities. First, they arrived in Canada in their old age and left their children in the United States. Second, they had no male, offspring and their daughters married non-Muslims. In those days, interfaith marriages were inevitable because the Muslim population was extremely small and probably scattered, and given their European ancestry, cultural differences would have been minor. The third possibility is that they had sons but they did not retain their parents' faith, again not an unlikely scenario because they could have married non-Muslim women and adopted the wife's faith.

Little is known about a number of other pioneers who came from what were then Turkey and Syria. It is certain that about 125 Turks and Syrians came to Canada sometimes before 1896. It is also documented that in 1916, they lived in the Prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta) (3). Although the documents do not list any Muslims among them, it is possible that they shunned disclosing their true religion to census takers in a face to face interview because of the prevailing social attitudes towards religious minorities, especially Muslims, at that time.

Unlike the pioneers who settled in Ontario, the early settlers - Muslims arriving in this century up to the First World War - tended to concentrate in the western provinces. Their arrival in Canada coincided with major economic events in the country e.g., the discovery of gold on Klondike Creek in the Yukon in 1897 commonly known as the Klondike gold rush, the construction of the railway

linking the west with the central provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and the opening up of Alberta and Saskatchewan for cultivation and settlement in 1905.

A large group of early Muslim settlers, most of whom were from Turkey and Bulgaria, arrived in the first decade of this century and settled in British Columbia. As a result, the Muslim community of British Columbia with a strength of 500 in 1911 was the largest in the country and made up nearly two-thirds of all Muslims in Canada. Vancouver alone had more Muslims, numbering 128, than the two largest provinces, Quebec and Ontario, together. However, the first quarter of this century was not an opportune time to be in British Columbia. The province was in an economic recession, sentiments were high against the 'Asiatics' and the 'Orientals', race riots erupted, discriminatory laws were passed and people of certain origins were encouraged to leave the province. Above all, as the First World War broke out, Turks became enemy aliens. Consequently, many Muslims left Canada, and in 1921 Vancouver had only six Muslims left. The total Muslim population of Canada, which had grown from 47 in 1901 to 797 in 1911, declined to 478 in 1921 as shown in Table 1.

The opening up of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1905 for cultivation and settlement attracted settlers who were mostly of West Indian and Middle Eastern origins. Some came as homesteaders but most worked as farm labor. A few settlers from Lebanon - most of whom came from the same village - took up fur trading. They and many of their descendants settled in a village called Lac La Biche in the province of Alberta, where the Muslim and Arab influence is evident even today in schools and in civic politics.

The economic boom in Quebec at the beginning of the 20th century attracted early Muslims settlers to Montreal where they worked as general laborers. The economic boom came to an abrupt end resulting in layoffs and very high unemployment. Those whose jobs survived the onslaught of the depression later had to contend with

galloping inflation and the scarcity of food. Soon afterwards, the outbreak of the First World War brought conscription. Whether any Muslims were conscripted is not known but the aftermath of the War created unsettled conditions in the province, culminating in riots and damage to property in protests against government policies. Consequently, several Muslims left the province for better opportunities elsewhere.

For nearly one century - from about 1850 when the pioneer Muslims arrived in Canada to the 1940s - the growth of Muslim community was spasmodic. Increases in their numbers were often interrupted by periods of declines, and the growth of population mainly rested on immigration which, in turn, depended on the needs of the economy. Consequently, as immigration fluctuated so did the Muslim population.

There are two main features of the spread of Islam and the growth of Muslim community in Canada, the ethnic and linguistic diversity (see Section 5.1 and Table 2) and geographical dispersion. In the early years, the Muslim community took the form of pockets of settlements, and up to the Second world War, there were significant concentrations in the western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) - a pattern typical of immigrant communities in the early stages of settlement. The opening up of Alberta and Saskatchewan for cultivation, the subsequent wheat boom and, above all, the Canadian immigration policy favoring farmers determined the pattern of settlement. But the allure of the Prairie provinces waned in the 1930's : the agricultural boom that lasted nearly a quarter century came to an end, and the subsequent economic depression was followed by unsettled conditions created by the Second World War.

The second phase in the growth of the community dates from the 1950s and was characterized by linguistic and educational factors. The Muslims arriving during this period, unlike their predecessors, were typically skilled workers and professionals and were brought to help

build the post-War economy. There were also increases in the number of Muslims from French-speaking countries who settled in the French-speaking Quebec. Bilingualism and later multiculturalism, which offered new immigrants the enviable choice of regions for settlement according to their linguistic and cultural preferences, played a significant role. Furthermore, inauguration of Islamic studies at McGill University in Montreal in 1952 and a decade later at the University of Toronto attracted Muslim scholars and students from abroad. However, the immigration policy remained restrictive because of the continued immigration quotas, and hence the growth of the community was limited.

The third and final phase began in the mid-1960's. In 1967, Canada's immigration policy was revised. Quotas were lifted and a selection system based on education and skills was introduced, diminishing the discretionary powers of immigration officials. Subsequently, many Muslims were admitted on the basis of economic criteria, which emphasized education and skills, to meet the growing needs of an expanding economy. As the spouses of these immigrants, who were generally young, joined them a few years later, the Muslims had a baby boom of their own.

The strong growth in Muslim population, making Islam the third largest religion in Canada, did little to raise the consciousness of Canadians about Islam or Muslims. In spite of the fact that Muslims had been a part of the Canadian religious spectrum for more than a century, the following of Islam was growing faster than any other religion in the country and the visible symbols of Muslim identity had been a permanent feature of the Canadian landscape for decades, Islam was little known and even less understood outside the universities offering courses in Islamic studies.

The period 1979 - 80 was the watershed and the revolution in Iran in 1979 was the catalyst. All of a sudden Muslims started taking pride in their faith and traditions openly and became visible. Apologists for

Islam were on the wane and could no longer go unchallenged. The most remarkable aspect of this self-awareness was that the young people were in the vanguard. It was not unusual to see young Muslim women in hijab or chador (head scarf) in schools and workplaces. The young Muslim men started holding congregational prayers on university campuses openly. Under pressure to give accountability, Muslim community leaders were forced to divert their energies from raising slogans to building the infrastructure needed to develop a cohesive community.

The impact of these events on the Canadian society was obvious. The May, 1981 annual convention of the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada attracted two cabinet ministers, and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario was the distinguished guest at the dinner in sharp contrast to the previous years when it used to be a feat to get any elected official to attend. Canada's national newspaper, the Globe and Mail, reported the convention in a column widely read and devoted to events of interest to the high society. The largest circulation daily, the Toronto Star, provided a full page coverage of the convention. Acknowledging the growing visibility of Islam, the government reintroduced Islam as a distinct religion in the decennial census of 1981(4) and followed it up with the release of a special statistical profile of Muslims based on the census data. The Muslim community in Canada had finally come of age. The growth in the numbers of Muslims in Canada is shown in Table 1 for the period 1854 - 1991.

Table 1: Muslim Population of Canada 1854 - 1991

Years	Population
1854	3
1871	13
1901	47
1911	797
1921	478

Following Table 1: Muslim Population of Canada 1854 - 1991

1931	645
1951	1,800
1961	5,800
1971	33,430
1976	69,300
1979	95,000
1981	98,165
1991	253,265

Sources : Data for 1871 to 1931, 1981 and 1991 are from the Census ; the rest are the author's estimates. For details, see Daood Hassan Hamdani, Muslims in Canada : A Century of Settlement, a paper presented at the First International Islamic Geographical Conference, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 1979.

Confident and no longer shy of the limelight, Muslims who used to depend on other religious minorities to spearhead advocacy for equality started taking the initiative themselves. In mid-1994, after having failed to persuade the Ottawa Board of Education to accord Muslim and other students the same consideration as shown to the Jewish students, they filed a lawsuit - scheduled to be heard in November, 1994 - that would test the country's commitment to freedom of religion (see Section 7) and will have consequences for all religious minorities. Criticized by some as an unreasonable and potentially detrimental step, (5) it drew support from newspaper editorialists and columnists and caught the attention of the national news media.

4 – Conversions to Islam in Canada

The discussion of Muslims in Canada is usually couched in terms of immigration, leaving the impression that Islam was introduced by settlers from Asia and Africa, and that conversions to Islam is only a

recent development. To the contrary, the pioneer Muslims, James and Agnes Love and John and Martha Simon, were converts or descendants of converts to Islam. Although no systematic accounts have been kept a significant number of conversions are known to have occurred as early as in the 1960's when Islam, despite its long history in Canada, was a little known phenomenon. Just to mention a few, Dr. Murray Hogben (a former university professor and now a journalist), Dr. Hisham Ahmed, formerly David Russell (a scientist and university professor) and Dr. Anab Whitehouse have been associated with Muslim organizations and causes for decades.

Subsequently, as Islam gained a higher profile, more and more people became interested in learning about it and eventually embraced it. While statistics are fragmentary and incomplete, the available evidence suggests that the number of Canadians accepting Islam is significant and increasing.

Many non-Muslims, disenchanted with the church because of its stand on social issues and scandals involving the clergy and TV evangelists, have turned away from their forefathers' faith. In search of purpose and meaning in their lives, some have joined other denominations within the Church but many more have left the Church altogether. Although there is very little effort on the part of Muslims to introduce them to the teachings of Islam, many are finding out on their own.

Often ignored by community leaders yet the most potent force in facilitating access to information about Islam is the role of Canadian-born Muslims. While immigrant Muslims define themselves in terms of what they are not, highlighting the differences that set them apart from non-Muslims and thus alienating them, the Canadian-born Muslims define themselves in terms of what they are, focusing on similarities and presenting differences as something not to be shunned but discussed and, if found desirable, adopted. Their role and approach are akin to those of Muslim traders in the early Muslim

history and sufis who traveled to distant lands, lived among the native people, adopted their culture and introduced Islam by example.

The Sufi movement, which began to take roots in Canada in the 1960's in Toronto, continues to attract non-Muslims. The pioneers of this movement are highly educated Muslims and organize activities of educational nature. This movement owes its origin to the late Dr. Mirza Qadeer Baig, a professor of religious studies at the University of Toronto and an authority on Sufism. After his death, his former student, Dr. Anab Whitehouse, a convert to Islam, is carrying on the work. Regular meetings and discussions and occasional university level seminars on Islam cast in the context of contemporary problems have become useful sources of information for non-Muslims.

Table 2 : Ethnic Diversity of Canada's Muslim Population, 1991

Single Origin	Total	Male	Female	% Distribution			Gender Ratio Women per 100 Men
				Total	Male	Female	
Total	227,600	124,050	103,555	89.87	89.96	89.76	83
British	3,120	1,475	1,640	1.23	1.07	1.42	111
French	1,275	595	680	0.50	0.43	0.59	114
West European	240	65	170	0.09	0.05	0.15	262
Dutch	90	20	65	0.04	0.01	0.06	325
German	125	45	80	0.05	0.03	0.07	178
Other	25	10	20	0.01	0.01	0.02	200
Northern Europe	45	10	30	0.02	0.01	0.03	300
Eastern Europe	250	85	165	0.10	0.06	0.14	194
Hungarian	35	10	30	0.01	0.01	0.03	300
Polish	55	30	25	0.02	0.02	0.02	83
Ukrainian	40	10	30	0.02	0.01	0.03	300
Other	120	45	80	0.05	0.03	0.07	178
Southern Europe	3,370	1,735	1,635	1.33	1.26	1.42	94
Balkan	2,860	1,530	1,330	1.13	1.11	1.15	87
Greek	50	30	20	0.02	0.02	0.02	67
Italian	175	55	120	0.07	0.04	0.10	218
Portuguese	100	40	55	0.04	0.03	0.05	138
Other	190	80	110	0.08	0.06	0.10	138
Other European	65	20	40	0.03	0.01	0.03	200
Arabs & West	96,385	55,750	40,635	38.06	40.43	35.22	73
Asians							
South Asians	90,890	47,015	43,880	35.89	34.09	38.03	93
Chinese	575	285	285	0.23	0.21	0.25	100
Fillipino	110	15	95	0.04	0.01	0.08	633

Following Table 2: Ethnic Diversity of Canada's Muslim Population, 1991

Other East & South East	2,425	1,230	1,190	0.96	0.89	1.03	97
African	11,715	6,770	4,945	4.63	4.91	4.29	73
Latin, Central & south American	185	75	115	0.07	0.05	0.10	153
Caribbean	5,505	2,600	2,905	2.17	1.89	2.52	112
African - American	8,080	4,655	3,430	3.19	3.38	2.97	74
Aboriginal	50	20	35	0.02	0.01	0.03	175
Other Single Origins							
Total	3,325	1,645	1,675	1.31	1.19	1.45	102
Canadian	1,715	830	885	0.68	0.60	0.77	107
Other	1,520	760	755	0.60	0.55	0.65	99
Multiple Origins							
Total	25,660	13,850	11,815	10.13	10.04	10.24	85
British Only	295	135	165	0.12	0.10	0.14	122
British and	290	100	190	0.11	0.07	0.16	190
French	85	25	60	0.03	0.02	0.05	240
British and Canadian							
British and Other	2,915	1,520	1,395	1.15	1.10	1.21	92
French and Other	1,325	720	605	0.52	0.52	0.52	84
British and/or French and other	555	325	235	0.22	0.24	0.20	72
Other	20,190	11,025	9,165	7.97	8.00	7.94	83
GRAND	253,265	137,895	115,370	100.00	100.00	100.00	84
TOTAL							

Source : 1991 Census of Canada

Interfaith marriages have also been a factor in conversions. Such unions usually involve immigrant Muslim men and non-Muslim women who at marriage convert to the husband's faith. This phenomenon is reflected in the highly lopsided gender ratios among Muslims of European and certain Asian origins (Table 2). For example, 72 per cent of the Muslims of West European origins are women ; among Northern Europeans, women account for 75 per cent, among Italians 69 per cent, and among the Filipinos 86 per cent.

In Montreal two revert communities came recently into being : one French (Quebecoise) ; the Other Haitian. they are growing in numbers and in activities.

5 – Demographics of Canadian Muslims

The number of Canadians professing Islam has increased substantially and stands at 253,265, or 0.94 per cent of total population, according to the 1991 census. Of these, 57,040 are Canadian by birth, comprising children born to Muslims and the converts. Children born to Muslims in interfaith marriages but not raised as Muslims are excluded. Two-thirds, 167,055, are foreign-born. Persons staying temporarily but who have been in the country for one year or more, i.e. students, persons on an employment permit and refugees - comprise nearly 12 per cent or 29,175. The Somalis entering Canada as refugees and an increase in the number of Muslim foreign students and trainees are the main components of this last category. Most of them will become permanent residents once the refugee claims have been processed.

The ethnic and linguistic diversity of the Canadian Muslim community affirms the universality of Islam (Table 2). The cultural and linguistic plurality of Muslims is in remarkable contrast to several other religions whose following is limited to certain geographic areas or ethnic groups in Canada. For example, 93 per cent of the followers of Christian Reformed Church are of Dutch origin, 82 per cent of the Ukrainian Catholics are Ukrainians and 86 per cent of the Hutterites are of German origin.

Muslims are spread across this vast land which stretches more than 3,500 miles from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and in all the ten provinces and two territories, Yukon and the Northwest. Regional distribution in Canada reflects the educational attainments, degree of urbanization and the cultural and linguistic characteristics of Muslims.

They are concentrated in the industrial and commercial centres of central Canada ; Ontario accounts for 57 per cent or 145,560, and Quebec, which has attracted a large number of French-speaking Muslims from North Africa and the Middle East, is home to 18 per cent (44,930). The geographical distribution of Canada's Muslim population is given in Table 3 for the period 1854 – 1991.

East of Quebec, there are 2,045 Muslims in the four Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick). Nova Scotia is one of the oldest centers of Islam.

West of Ontario, the three Prairie provinces account for 14.1 per cent of the Muslim population. Manitoba and Saskatchewan, where Muslims first arrived in the first decade of the 20th century as homesteaders and farm workers, have not experienced much growth and account for 3,525 and 1,185 Muslims respectively. Alberta, the home of the first mosque in Canada has 31,000 Muslims.

Finally, 24,925 Muslims live in the westernmost province of British Columbia and 90 in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Table 3 : Geographical Distribution of Canada's Muslim Population, 1854 – 1991

Province	1854	1871	1901	1921	1931	1971	1981	1991
Newfoundland						70	100	305
Prince Edward Island						60	70	60
Nova Scotia				40	37	570	790	1,435
New Brunswick				10	9	220	315	250
Quebec			10	31	45	8,380	12,115	44,930
Ontario	3	13	15	77	55	19,375	52,110	145,560
Manitoba				1	31	36	590	1,925
Saskatchewan					144	193	490	1,120
Alberta					63	126	2,310	16,865
British Columbia				6	82	136	1,335	12,715
Yukon*					15	8	30	35
Northwestern Territories								55
Total	3	13	47	478	645	33,430	98,165	253,265

* Includes data for Northwest Territories for all years except 1991.

** In 1867, Canadian Confederation included Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. Manitoba joined in 1870, British

Columbia in 1871 and Prince Edward Island in 1873. Saskatchewan and Alberta were created provinces in 1905 ; before that they were part of Territories. Newfoundland was the latest entry, joining in 1949. Source : See Table 1.

Notwithstanding the dispersion over a vast area, 86 per cent of the Muslims live in only six metropolitan areas, and 65 per cent are within 350 miles of each other. The six largest areas of concentration are : Toronto, the largest city in the country, 105,970; Montreal, 41,215; Vancouver, 23,335 ; Ottawa, the capital of Canada, 17,585 ; Edmonton, 14,815 and Calgary, 13,895.

As is typical of immigrant population where migrants are driven by the desire to improve their economic situation, the gender ratio is lopsided among Muslims. In spite of the emphasis on family reunification in the immigration policy in the 1980's to make it easier for Canadians of foreign origins to bring their families, men outnumber women. In the marriageable age group, 20 to 39 years old, there are 79 women per 100 men. Given the recent sentiment against immigration, especially in the family reunification class, the ratio is unlikely to improve.

More than one-third (35.3 per cent) of the Muslim population is under 19 years of age, in the formative phase of their lives, growing up in families where increasingly both parents work outside the home and children are usually left in the care of nannies and baby sitters. The vast majority of Muslims are in the working age group, 20 to 60 years old. People above 60 years of age constitute a very small proportion, 6 per cent (compared to 15 per cent for the Canadian population as a whole) ; this percentage has risen from 4 per cent in 1981.

6 – Economic Life of Canadian Muslims

The economic life of the Muslim community has been significantly influenced by Canada's immigration policy. The emphasis on bringing

skilled and professional labor to meet the needs of the economy did not attract entrepreneurs, and the immigrants who wanted to start businesses had little money left after paying for their long journey, and in many cases, foreign exchange controls in their native countries limited the amount of funds they could bring. Therefore, setting up businesses tended to be the choice of those who could raise enough money from their families and friends. Consequently, the businesses were few and small, and principally geared towards supplying the community's needs such as grocery stores, garment shops, restaurants specializing in ethnic cuisine and, as the community grew, travel agencies. Some immigrants also made use of their contacts in the native countries and set up trading companies. As the market for these businesses was limited they remained small.

Beginning in the mid-1970's, several large enterprises were set up by the newly arrived entrepreneurs from Uganda and other East African countries. A change in the immigration policy in the 1980's to permit businessmen from abroad to obtain landed immigrant status in exchange for setting up business in Canada provided further impetus. Lately, encouraged by the success of these businesses and forced by the high level of unemployment, some professionals and skilled workers have also ventured into business.

The lack of entrepreneurial class is only one of the problems. Difficulty in access to capital from the Canadian financial institutions is another major impediment. This has induced some Muslims to be innovative : taking advantage of their high levels of schooling and skills, they have established businesses that rely on human rather than financial and physical capital. A notable example is the information technology industry.

Besides capital, another missing factor is networking to bring interested Muslims together in institutions of their own like trade associations, chambers of commerce, etc. where they can exchange management ideas, information on markets, clients and the availability

and sources of capital, etc. Communities within Muslims who have networks do better in business.

Difficulties notwithstanding, Muslim businessmen have already made their mark as entrepreneurs and good corporate citizens. An example is the selection in 1993 of a Muslim among the top ten persons in Canadian business for the prestigious Excellence in Business Award. He was Sayyad Ebrahim, President of Par-Pak Ltd., a manufacturer of plastic food containers.

Given the relatively small number of businesses and self-employed professionals, most Muslims depend on employment for their livelihood. The incidence of unemployment is higher among them than among non-Muslims. Data on the religious affiliation of the unemployed are only collected in the decennial census of population but the analysis of statistics from other sources shows that in 1986, 12.4 per cent of the Muslims looking for work could not find a job. By comparison, only 7.5 per cent of the Jews were unemployed and the unemployment rate for the country as a whole was 9.3 per cent. (6).

The demographic, geographic, educational and occupational factors, the vital determinants of one's ability to find a job, do not fully explain why unemployment rates are higher among Muslims. They have a higher average level of schooling, are in occupations which are in demand, and are in age groups which typically experience lower unemployment rates.

Systemic discrimination is partly to blame although the magnitude of its effect is difficult to determine. It manifests itself in the application of practices or criteria that are of little relevance to job requirements. It may include, for example, the 'buddy system' of hiring, requiring Canadian experience which new immigrants do not possess, refusal to hire certain linguistic groups on the pretext that the public interest is best served by hiring those whose mother tongue is English, requiring unnecessary dress codes which might go against the

religious practices and convictions of some groups, setting physical standards such as height, etc.

Inter-generational differences provide an important indication of the progress of a minority group in terms of its adaptation as well as the majority's acceptance of it. Two criteria can be applied to judge the progress. First, do the successive generations experience less difficulty in finding employment? Secondly, are the successive generations accorded the same treatment as non-Muslims? The second criterion is more pertinent because the second and third generation Muslims were educated in Canada just like the rest of the Canadian labor force, and, therefore, are not saddled with any language problems that may be used as an excuse to deny them a job or a promotion. Nor can the quality of education be used as a pretext because after all they received education at the same institutions as did others. Studies show that some progress has been made but much more remains to be done (7).

Discrimination on religious grounds is prohibited in Canada, and complaints against the offenders can be filed with the Human Rights Commission. (8) While religion is not a factor in the formulation of policy or the design of affirmative action programs, Muslims stand to benefit from measures aimed at 'visible minorities', a euphemism for Canadians of Asian and African origins who comprise by far the largest proportion of Muslims in Canada. However, these programs have had little impact in general (9) and even less on Muslims because they are limited in scope, lack deterrents against those who are not in compliance and do not specifically deal with full-time employment and promotions. A mandatory review of the Employment Equity Act to make it more effective was recently completed but no amendments have been introduced yet.

The Muslim labor force has high levels of schooling, is professional and skilled - partly the result of Canada's immigration policy and partly a reflection of the belief that education is an

investment in the future. Twenty-seven per cent of the Muslims in the prime labor force, age group 25 to 44 years, have one or more university degrees. (10). In spite of an increase in the number of refugees and women in recent years, the proportion of degree holders in the Muslim labor force is much higher than the 17 per cent for Canada as a whole. As a result of the higher levels of education and schooling, Muslims in Canada enjoy a good standard of living. In 1985, the average income of a full-time Muslim employee was \$27,900, almost exactly the same as the average for the whole country. (11).

Hidden in the average income are wide variations in the standard of living. (12). Of particular concern is the incidence of low income among one-parent families headed by women and families headed by the elderly people who are mainly retirees. While reasons for the poverty among one-parent families are straightforward, several factors have contributed to the low income of the elderly : late entry into the Canadian labor market ; lower pay because the qualifications and experience acquired in the native countries were not treated as equivalent to that in Canada; and changing jobs (13) in pursuit of a career and hence loss of pension credits because they are not portable from one firm to another. Data show that in the retirement age group, one in three Muslim families compared to one in eight non-Muslim families is in the low income group.

The extent of poverty among the elderly Muslims may be overstated - although its seriousness must not be undermined - in that it is measured by relating expenses to income, without taking into consideration assets and differences in lifestyles. (14). Muslims tend to purchase larger and hence more expensive residential dwellings and consequently their expenditure on housing is relatively higher. This is both a cultural trait and a perception that dwelling is an investment asset, and the larger it is the better for a secure future for them and their children who will eventually inherit it.

In the context of the current debate on the high cost of Canada's social security system, it is relevant to note that Muslims withdraw much less from the system and contribute much more to it than the Canadian population as a whole. Muslim families derive only 4 per cent of their total income from social security programs - old age pensions, unemployment insurance benefits, family allowances, welfare payments, etc., according to the 1981 census. By comparison, this percentage for all families in Canada is 7 per cent. The comparisons are striking with regard to the financing of the social security program. While there are only five people working to support one in retirement in the country, among Muslims there are 15 workers to support each retiree. (15).

The Muslim contribution to the economy goes far beyond what the numbers can convey. Muslims participated in almost every major event in the economic history of Canada. Muslim laborers hewed rocks, laid tracks and struck nails to build the Canadian Pacific railway in the late 19th century, an event dubbed the "national dream" because of its importance. Muslim farmers were among the pioneers who opened up Alberta and Saskatchewan for cultivation and settlement in the beginning of the 20th century. Skilled and professional Muslim immigrants kept up the tempo of economic growth in the 1960's and 1970's. Muslim educators responded to the need for teachers and professors as the baby boom of the post-Second World War period rolled into grade schools and then graduate schools, thus strengthening the foundation for a secure and prosperous economic future for the country.

One of the difficult aspects of economic life for Muslims is the pervasive use of credit and interest in the Canadian economy and the growing shift towards cashless transactions pointing to an ever increasing reliance on the banking institutions. Muslim face this dilemma almost every day because it is impossible to maintain the Canadian standard of living without the use of credit. Yet Muslim

financial and economic institutions are in their nascent stage. Some enterprises have been set up according to the Islamic concepts of mudaraba and musharaka, (16) with the most common applications being to the purchases of residential dwellings, commonly known as housing cooperatives. (17). While they have served to help some needy individuals, their relative impact is insignificant.

The lack of financial institutions leaves a huge reservoir of funds untapped which could be channeled towards the economic development of the community. Muslims earn about \$2,025 million annually in wages and salaries, excluding income from businesses and investments. Most of this money finds its way into banks and similar institutions - approximately \$170 million in the form of savings and investments, and the rest in checking accounts to discharge financial obligations - to pay taxes, pay off mortgages on houses, retire loans taken to buy cars and pay bills for other purchases made on credit.

The opportunity lost because of the absence of proper and dependable financial institutions can be illustrated by an example. If every Muslim family donates as much as a Canadian household to religious and charitable institutions such as schools, universities and hospitals, Muslims will raise more than \$18 million per year - an amount larger than the combined operating budgets of all mosques, Islamic centers, Muslim schools and charitable organizations in Canada, an amount sufficient to pay off almost the entire debt of the Muslim institutions or to run all the one dozen or so Muslim schools as first rate educational institutions. There is no central or regional institutionalized arrangement to collect donations and put them to use for the development of the community.

7 – Community Organization in Canada

The Canadian society is highly institutionalized. It is very difficult for any community to be effective without an organization to speak for it and initiate and maintain contacts with non-Muslims as well as

to make it easier for others - the communication media, government agencies and social, cultural, and educational institutions - to contact Muslims.

Local Muslim community associations are the first expression of the Muslim identity in Canada. (18). There is at least one Muslim association in every city and several in large cities. Local Muslim associations typically focus on local concerns, i.e., providing premises for prayers, imparting basic teachings of Islam on children, and, in a few cases, running schools with full curriculum (see Section 9). More recently and in cities where mosques have been constructed, attention is being paid, often at the initiative of professionals, to providing support systems like aid to the needy, counseling in case of disputes in the family and marriage bureaux. The services provided are minuscule relative to the need and totally absent in smaller communities, forcing Muslims to rely on public, non-Islamic institutions.

Local Muslim associations are typically dominated by foreign-born Muslims. The Canadian-born Muslims are hardly visible in the make-up of the administration even though they constitute 23 per cent of the population. This has raised concern that ethnic and cultural customs are sometimes confused with Islamic traditions by the immigrant-dominated associations.

A co-product of the preponderance of the immigrant group is the increasing role, albeit unintentional, of ethnicity in local community organizations. In some instances, it is obvious from the very name of the organization and in others the functional language of the imam indicates the national or ethnic preferences. Still other Muslim associations follow the unwritten but entrenched convention of alternating the presidency among major ethnic or linguistic groups. There is a difference of opinion as to its implications for the development of a cohesive Canadian Muslim community. At any rate, the rigors of ethnicity would probably relax as the proportion of

Canadian-born Muslims continues to increase and at a faster pace than in the past because they are likely to be less conscious of ethnicity.

Umbrella organizations at the provincial level are non-existent, and national associations have a chequered history. During the past thirty years, four national organizations have operated in Canada at different times. The first such organization was the Islamic Federation of America (IFA), based in the United States. It was never very active and ceased operations within a few years. The vacuum was filled by the formation in the early 1970's of the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC). A Commission appointed by the CMCC in the early 1980's to help prepare a blueprint for the future did more damage than good, and the Council which owed its existence to the efforts of a few individuals has since been dormant. The Islamic Society of North America (formerly Muslim Students Association), based in the United States, has regional directors in Canada. Canada tends to be peripheral in ISNA's decision-making which is primarily guided by US considerations, and its regional conferences, where the center stage is usually occupied by speakers from the United States, fall short of being a forum for Canadian issues. The Organization of North American Shi'a Isna Ashari Muslim Associations (NASIMCO), headquartered in Toronto, and founded at about the same time as the CMCC, is the oldest, active, Canadian-based umbrella organization.

Besides these, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, based in Toronto, was set up to provide Muslim women with a voice on issues concerning women.

The difficulties encountered by the national Muslim organizations do not come as a surprise to those who have studied the functioning of national legislative and administrative institutions in Canada. Uneven population distribution and the huge size of the country - it is cheaper to travel from Canada to Europe than between certain points within Canada - pose challenge to any national organization with respect to regional representation. The failure to grasp this reality has often led

to misdirected and arrested criticism of the national Muslim organizations (19). Given the concern of small local organizations that they are not fully represented or heard, it may be worthwhile to explore the possibility of forming provincial umbrella Muslim organizations, similar to the Islamic councils of the Australian states.

Priorities differ somewhat among national organizations but the following concerns and causes appear to be common to all of them : youth programs (camps, conferences, exchanges between provinces and with other countries), education (textbooks for Muslim schools, for all students in public schools, teachers' training), dawah (lectures on Islam, television programs, traveling exhibits, Muslim world map), prejudices and biases against Islam in textbooks and media, and interfaith dialogue (Canadian Council of Churches, Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, Islam and the West project). Some of the projects never got off the ground and others are in various stages of progress. The inability of national organizations to enlist the help of competent professionals and, to a lesser degree, the lack of resources are the main limitations. Excellent progress has been made where competent professionals have taken on the task on their own or under the aegis of an organization. An example is the development of reading material and innovative techniques to teach Muslim children in a non-Muslim society. There are two outstanding examples. Textbooks for Muslims children and brochures on Muslims and Islam, commissioned and published by Qasem Mahmud, who has made many and varied contributions to the development of the Canadian Muslim community, are in demand worldwide. Nisar Sheraly, a Toronto-based educator, has pioneered new techniques of teaching Muslim children living in non-Muslim countries. Examples of his work include coloring books showing holy places of Muslims and English stories employing Arabic words in a very innovative way, like: "Feel the Elephant" (Feel is the Arabic word for elephant). His work has received recognition in Canada and abroad.

The main vehicles of communication - so important in a country where geographical distances are enormous - are conferences and print media. Annual national and regional Islami Conferences are held every year, but a national publication covering Canadian issues of concern to Muslims and serving as a vehicle to keep them in touch with each other in this vast country is conspicuous by its absence. A national magazine "Islam Canada", an organ of the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada, which was distributed widely and free of charge, ceased publication in 1980. The Crescent International, a Toronto-based bi-weekly newsmagazine with international circulation and published in Arabic and English, is international in orientation although it does have country news. At the city level, several local associations publish newsletters with circulation usually limited to members or those attending the local mosque.

In some cases, the local and emerging professional Muslim associations have filled the vacuum left by national organizations and have taken up several causes, including biases in school textbooks, amendments to provincial laws concerning places of worship, education policies, school textbooks, etc. In general, progress has been made : in some cases, efforts resulted in action by public authorities and in others, a debate was started which raised the public consciousness of the inequities in the system. A notable example is the Islamic Schools Federation of Ontario, incorporated in March, 1994. Within a short period, the Federation has made significant contributions, including a submission to the Ontario Commission on Learning setting forth the Muslim viewpoint on education and public schools - the only Muslim organization to respond to the Commission's request for submissions - and taking up the issue of equal treatment of children of all faiths in Ontario's secular public schools, after the Ottawa Board of Education and a few boards in Toronto decided to delay the opening of schools by two days in September, 1994 because of the Jewish new year. The Federation filed

a lawsuit in a bid to have Islamic holy days recognized in Ottawa schools. If successful, it will apply to other jurisdictions as well and will affect all religious minorities.

8 – Muslim Religious Institutions in Canada

First and foremost among the Muslim religious institutions is the mosque. In addition to the many roles the mosque has played in history, in a non-Muslim country it serves as a symbol of the Muslim identity and a public announcement that Muslims are a permanent part of the society. It is also expected to make up for the deficiencies of social institutions. Cognizant of its pivotal role as a place of worship, transmitter of religious values and a socializing agent, the Muslim community assigned the construction of mosques the highest priority.

In Canada, the earliest places of worship for Muslims were in the homes, school buildings, embassy premises, parish halls and annexes to churches. Nearly a century passed before the first mosque was built. A modest one-room structure, elegant in its simplicity, a testament to the fervency of the faith of the Muslims of Edmonton and the first public announcement of the presence of the community of believers in Islam in Canada, Al-Rashid mosque opened its doors on December 12, 1938 after more than a decade of planning and hard work. The dedication ceremony was performed by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, whose English translation of the meanings of the Qur'an is widely known. Originally built at the corner of 102nd Street and 111th Avenue in Edmonton, it was moved twice to other sites - once in 1946 to make room for a school and a few years later to make way for the expansion of a neighboring hospital - and was later declared a heritage building (20).

Soon after the completion of Al-Rashid mosque, the country became preoccupied with the Second World War and a long pause was to follow before more mosques were built. As the life returned to

normal and more Muslim settlers arrived along with foreign Muslim students and trainees in the 1950's and 1960's, the need for religious institutions became more pressing. Islamic centers and mosques began to emerge more rapidly -Toronto (1956), Vancouver and Calgary (1963), London (1964), Winnipeg (1976). Many mosques of this era were in converted church buildings and parish halls as erecting new buildings required dealing with zoning by-laws, obtaining various licenses and permits and finding architects familiar with Islamic architecture. While these structures provided a place to worship, they were not visible to the society as the symbols of Muslim identity. Mosques with Islamic architecture flourished in the 1980's.

Almost every major city has one and large cities have several mosques. Metropolitan Toronto, where 41 per cent of the Muslims live, has more than a dozen mosques including the largest in the country. Other cities with several mosques include Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa and Edmonton.

In spite of the multiple uses of the mosque in history - as a place of worship, university, parliament, court of law, and as a town hall - in Canada the uses are somewhat limited. While some mosques allow and encourage functions providing the Muslim community with opportunities to socialize in an Islamic setting, others limit activities strictly to prayers, meetings of the local Muslim association and Sunday schools.

A debate has been going on for years about the socializing role of the mosque in preparing young Muslims for and facilitating their transition to adult and married life. Given the lack of Muslim schools, absence of recreational facilities and the strain on Muslim family, the mosque is expected to take on more functions than in traditional Muslim societies: Failing this, it is inevitable that Muslim youth will continue to resort to ethnic associations where culture and ethnicity are more visible than Islam not to mention the non-Islamic influences. Since the word mosque only connotes prayers to some Muslims, over

time some Muslim associations have tended to use terms like Islamic center to provide for some flexibility.

Along with the institutions of family and the mosque, the imam occupies an extremely important position, especially in the formative phase of the Muslim community. He combines the roles of numerous religious and social institutions. He is revered as a religious leader, respected as a scholar, trusted as an advisor and is expected to speak out frankly as he is not supposed to be beholden to anyone. In a non-Muslim country, he is also expected to bridge the generation gap and relate Islamic teachings to the contemporary society. As the imams in Canada are typically foreign-born, two issues need to be addressed to realize the full potential of this institution, i.e., how to bridge the gap between the environment in which the imam received his education and the totally different society in which he has to impart the teachings, and how to ensure his independence from those who sponsored his immigration and pay his salary should a difference of opinion arise on issues of concern to Muslims.

The earliest attempts to expose Islam to non-Muslims were due to students who organized lectures on university campuses. This arrangement was subsequently formalized with regular lectures on the Prophet's birth anniversary and Ashura (the martyrdom of Imam Hussein) and occasionally on other subjects of interest. Of late, some information centers have been set up, although the amount of literature they have on Islam is limited and often written in antiquated English whose idioms and expressions do not fully convey what is intended. The effectiveness of these *centers* can be considerably improved by employing the new technology - computers, computer discs and CD Roms - and having resource people at hand who can easily communicate with non-Muslims in their languages. A number of TV programs are also telecast taking advantage of the Vision TV, a channel exclusively meant for religious and spiritual programming.

As noted earlier (Section 4) the Sufi movement is active and attracting interested non-Muslims. Groups of Tablighi Jama'at from India and Pakistan make frequent trips to Canada but their modus operandi - visiting people in their homes unannounced and emphasizing deterrents to bad deeds rather than the positive aspects of Islam which lead to a fulfilling life - leaves much to be desired. A development of late is the trend towards debates with Christians, usually with an admission charge. The usefulness of debates beyond raising funds is, at best, uncertain. Discussions, not debates charged with rhetoric, suit the Canadian temperament. A person whose desire to learn about a religion, driven by search for purpose and meaning in life, is looking for substance rather than debating points. Moreover, the debaters who have so far taken part on either side are not religious scholars of any standing.

There is scope for substantial work in this area. After one and a half century of the presence of Islam in Canada, ignorance about Muslims and Islam is still encountered even among the highly educated Canadians. Moreover, nearly 13 per cent of Canadians (3.4 million) are not affiliated with any religion. They are not agnostics nor atheists, and are in search of a religion. In comparison to the Muslims, the followers of other religions are devoting considerable energies and resources to reach these people. For example, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has set aside \$5 million to attract converts and unaffiliated Jews. (21). The Bahais and the Hindus have been much more effective in introducing their religious teachings to aboriginal Canadians than have the Muslims.

9 – Muslim Educational Institutions in Canada

Education is the most vital element in the life of any community. It not only affects its economic, social and political evolution but also moulds its character, influences its cultural values and plays a vital role in the preservation of its identity.

Muslim educational institutions can be classified into three types according to their orientation and scope of teaching ; madharis (plural of madhrasah, an Arabic word for school, here used in the sense of a school of primarily religious instructions attached to a mosque), weekend schools and regular elementary schools.

Madharis primarily impart religious instructions, teach about Islam and how to read the Qur'an. These are typically located on mosque premises and classes are held one day a week, usually on Sundays. They are located in every city. Though large in number and in the earliest Muslim educational institution in Canada, they account for a very small number of children, in part because of the limited space. While some madharis offer good physical facilities, most are cramped and classrooms are makeshift and noisy. Teachers are almost always volunteers whose zeal far exceeds their teaching techniques and communication skills. Pedagogical aids are usually poor and there is virtually no accountability. Initially, madharis provided only religious instructions but with the passage of time, some have added the teaching of mother tongues to the curriculum.

Weekend schools are held on Saturdays or Sundays and on the premises of regular public schools. The premises are available to community organizations for a nominal charge to cover the cost of cleaning up. The curriculum of weekend schools is much broader than that of the madharis and covers Islamic culture, history, civilization, Arabic and mother tongues as well as religious studies. There are other differences as well. Since such schools are eligible to receive funding from provincial governments, they can afford to hire qualified teachers and hold them accountable for their performance. These schools exceed the number of madharis and account for a much larger student population. By one estimate, which appears to be conservative, the province of Ontario alone has fifty such schools (22).

Thirdly, there are the regular Muslim schools, offering full curriculum prescribed by the provincial education departments, leading to the award of a diploma by school boards, and, in addition, courses in Islam and Muslim history and civilization. There are only a dozen or so such schools in Canada ; two in Alberta (Calgary and Edmonton), one in British Columbia (Richmond), four in Ontario (two in Toronto and two in Ottawa) and two in Quebec. Three more schools are planned in Ontario ; one in Toronto, one in London and one in Windsor. Together, these schools have about two thousand students. Such schools require good administration, qualified teachers, and are expensive to run, requiring about \$7,000 annual tuition fee per student based on an optimum number of students. Few schools, whether run by Muslim or other religious organizations raise enough funds through tuition fees to be self-financing. (23).

Clearly, the present Muslim educational institutions are inadequate to meet the needs in terms of capacity and, in most cases, quality. Muslim schools that teach regular curriculum cater to an insignificant fraction of about 83,000 Muslim children under the age of 17 years who are or will shortly be in Canada's public school system. Until the Muslims are able to set up their own schools, more attention to the Canadian public school system is in order.

As property taxpayers, Muslims finance the public school system and are entitled to and must, as responsible citizens, participate in the current debate as well as subsequent discussions affecting the policies and curriculum of schools. Indeed, they have a higher stake in the school system: 33 per cent of the Muslim population is under 17 years of age and already is in or will soon pass through the public school system compared to 25 per cent of the entire Canadian population.

Some progress has already been made. As Canada's religious make-up is changing, educational institutions are adapting to the new reality. For example, recitation of the Lord's prayer has been stopped in public schools (23) (24), and the granting of credits for Bible

studies, which used to be the exclusive preserve of the Catholic schools, has been extended to independent schools. (25). However, this is of little consequence for Muslims as only about 2,000 children who attend Muslim schools can take advantage of it.

Much more needs to be done. While all but a small number of Muslim children attend public schools, in at least one province there are no secular public schools. In Newfoundland, all students must take courses in religion which range from Christian ethics to the study of the Bible depending upon the school system. The Church's right to teach religious courses was enshrined in the legislation prior to Newfoundland's joining the Canadian confederation in 1949, and the Terms of Union with Canada prevents the provincial legislature from passing any "laws prejudicially affecting any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools" that were operating at the time (26). The relatively small Muslim population of Newfoundland and Labrador - 305 out of the total provincial population of 563,935 - is unlikely to carry much weight in government decisions.

Financing of independent schools run by religious groups varies from province to province. The Maritime provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) provide no funding for independent religious schools while Quebec and the four western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) fund them partially. Financing of such schools by government in the largest province, Ontario, has been the subject of controversy for some years because Ontario only finances Catholic schools.

Several religious groups, notably the Jewish, have been lobbying the Ontario government for years for legislative changes to extend financial support to all religious schools. In 1992, dissatisfied with the results, the Jews, joined by several other religious organizations, launched a court challenge on the grounds that Ontario government's policy to finance only Catholic and no other independent schools violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court disagreed, and

the emphasis has now shifted back to convincing the politicians of the merits of the case.

Beyond secondary schools, many universities offer courses in Islamic studies and the related major oriental languages, Arabic, Persian and Urdu, and several have degree programs. The history of university education in Islamic studies in Canada goes back to 1952 with the establishment of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University. The University of Toronto followed suit about a decade later. Subsequently, many other universities have introduced degree programs in Islamic studies. Most of the university teachers giving these courses are Islamists and orientalists.

Most university libraries have large collections of books on Islam. In some cities, public libraries also have sizeable collections.

10 – Muslim Social Institutions in Canada

The family is the most fundamental social institution. It is the most nurturing of places, the most formative of influences on children. It is also the first experience in human relationships. The essence of human relationships lies in the consciousness of self and others around us, and the search for this consciousness begins in the family of origin into which one is born, continues in the family of formation with marriage and is fulfilled in the society.

The institution of family has been the subject of enormous changes in the post-1960's age of social liberation : an increasing number of women entering the labor force, the right to divorce, legalization of abortion, convenient access to contraceptives in schools, the growing visibility and acceptance of homosexuality as a lifestyle, surrogate motherhood and advances in reproductive technologies. These changes have produced new family forms, surrendered some traditional family functions to non-family institutions and forced a redistribution of functions within the family. The issue of defining the

modern family has become so contentious that the Canadian Committee for the Year of the Family, like its United Nations counterpart, has instead chosen to focus on its functions. (27).

Just as these changes place the family under stress (28) the lack of support systems based on Islamic values forces Muslims to rely even more on this institution in order to prepare children for a useful role in both the community and the society. By most yardsticks - civic responsibility, contribution to the society, education and work ethics - the Muslim family continues to perform its functions efficiently and effectively and is an asset to the society. However, it is impossible to remain immune from changes in the surrounding environment.

The most obvious influence is the transition to the nuclear family. The majority of Muslims living in Canada are from societies where the standard family unit is the extended family. This family type serves as the most important mediating agent between the family and society and provides a bridge between generations, and its role as a socializing force is unique. However, this family form has all but disappeared due to the preference for workers over dependent family members in the immigration policy, the economic necessity forcing both spouses to work outside the home, the demographic structure and a degree of adaptation.

The transition to the nuclear family means that the number of family members who can act as role models, set examples and provide guidance in order to furnish a link between the family and the society has diminished. According to the 1981 census, only 2 per cent of Muslim families consist of seven or more members; 5 per cent have 6 members and 13 per cent have five members. Families of five or more persons are less common among Muslims born in Canada than among Muslim immigrants.

For a significant number of Muslim children, even the daily socializing functions of a nuclear family are absent as they are being

raised in one-parent families, i.e., with only mother or father. According to the 1981 census, 9 per cent of Muslim children grow up in families where there is only one parent. In 80 per cent of the one-parent families, it is the mother who raises children without the father.

Muslim family is becoming more and more characterized by interfaith marriages, making transmittal of Islamic values more difficult. This is partly a reflection of the peculiar demographic structure of the Muslim population but more importantly of changing attitudes. Interfaith marriages are more common among Canadian-born Muslims than Muslim immigrants. Among the immigrant population, most of the interfaith unions (four out of five) are between a Muslim male and a non-Muslim female. But the opposite holds for Muslims born in Canada: among them 405 families out of 1,030 in the 1981 census are comprised of a Muslim wife and a non-Muslim husband; 380 households consist of a Muslim husband and a non-Muslim wife, while in the remaining 245 families both spouses are Muslim. According to the 1981 census data, only one-quarter of the children born to a Muslim mother and a non-Muslim father are raised as Muslims. Table 4 gives the figures concerning interfaith marriage and the faith of children for Canadian Muslims.

Many young Muslim women have grown up in the midst of the feminist movement. Some of them are caught between two mystiques - the feminine mystique which saw their mothers confined to domesticity and the feminist mystique that seemed to promise everything - a career and marriage and children. It remains to be seen whether their families can modify the husband-wife roles to help them balance a career with family life or they will collapse out of exhaustion. They are trying nevertheless, forced, in part, by the economic necessity. More and more Muslim women are entering the labor force and working outside the home. The labor force participation rate for young women is much higher than that for the older age group, and is close to that for men in the same age group.

For single women, it is estimated at 74 per cent, compared with 80 per cent for men. (29).

As the institution of family has become deficient in coping with the rapid social and technological changes taking place in the society more and more non-family institutions - baby sitters, day care centers, children's aid societies, peers, nursing homes, social workers and the media - are taking over the functions being relinquished by the family. As the emerging institutions do not necessarily conform to Islamic ethics and values, the Muslim family has to fend for itself. The support systems set up by Muslims are rudimentary and inadequate.

With the number of interfaith marriages, especially between Muslim women and non-Muslim men, growing, particular attention is being paid to devising ways to facilitate marriages between Muslims. To this end, a few marriage bureaux have been set up. However, they have not caught the match seekers' fancy, for several reasons. First, young men and women are not likely to register on their own. Second, some parents are reluctant to seek these services because of the taboo attached to girl's parents taking the initiative for matrimony. Equally important is the question of trust. Match seekers' parents need to be assured that the information they supply will be properly guarded. Finally, the options provided are limited especially in smaller communities. As a remedy, some marriage bureaux advertise in the matrimonial columns of Canadian newspapers inviting Muslims from other cities to register in order to broaden the prospects for men and women of the local community.

**Table 4 : Family Formation and Interfaith Marriages,
Canadian Muslims, 1981**

	Number of Families	Number of Children		
		Total	Muslim	Non- Muslim
Both Parents Present All Muslims	25,640	40,915	35,715	5,200
Both parents Muslim	19,530	33,555	33,320	235
Only Father Muslim	4,480	5,380	1,945	3,435

**Following Table 4 : Family Formation and Interfaith Marriages,
Canadian Muslims, 1981**

	1,630	1,980	450	1,530
ONLY MOTHER MUSLIM	24,605	39,685	35,330	4,355
FOREIGN-BORN MUSLIMS	19,280	33,230	33,050	180
Both parents Muslim	4,100	4,885	1,900	2,985
Only Father Muslim	1,225	1,570	380	1,190
CANADIAN-BORN MUSLIMS	1,035	1,230	385	845
Both parents Muslim	245	325	270	55
Only parents Muslim	380	495	45	450
Only Mother Muslim	405	410	70	340
ONLY ONE PARENT PRESENT				
ALL MUSLIMS	2,230	4,005	3,635	370
Mother not present	440	890	750	140
Father not present	1,790	3,115	2,885	230
GRAND TOTAL	27,870	44,920	39,350	5,570

Source : 1981 Census of Canada.

Data from the 1991 census were not available at the time of writing

A more popular medium among match-seekers is the matrimonial advertisements. (28).

An increase in the number of men and women using this medium is a reflection of the seriousness of the problem as well as the deficiency of alternative institutions. Women placing advertisements are on average 31 years old - two years older than the average Canadian bride at marriage. Some are divorcees but a large number have never been married before. Concerned that their daughters might never find a Muslim husband, some parents place announcements for their daughters as young as 17 years old, barely above the minimum age at which a girl can get married in Canada without parental consent.

11 – Future Trends

The quest for identity continues, progressing to a higher plateau in each successive phase. From self-preservation in the early years manifest in the formation of local community associations to identity revolving around the mosque, Muslims are finally seeking to establish themselves as a distinct community in the Canadian society, displaying tendency to take the initiative, backed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to establish their rights as a normal condition of existence. The numbers are on their side.

Demographic characteristics point to a continued strong but somewhat less hectic growth in Muslim population, making Islam the second largest religion in terms of following in the 1990's. However, in a reversal of the pattern, births and conversions, not immigration, will provide the main thrust.

Already visible, the shift in the population mix towards Canadian-born Muslims will become a force, and portends changes in the way the community views adaptation, reacts to social changes taking place in the Canadian society, develops its social institutions and participates in the political process.

12 – Conclusions

In spite of the accomplishments, the principal aim of establishing a strong Muslim community in the Canadian society has still to be achieved. The community is organized around religious institutions for self-preservation, and is only beginning to advance and assert itself as an entity in the country's educational, social and political institutions. Canada provides a receptive and accommodating environment. There are abundant human and financial resources, Muslim Canadians being the most educated and enjoying one of the highest standards of living in the world. The resources need to be gathered and guided to develop the community and enrich the Canadian society.

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- 1- Alain Baril and George Mori, "Leaving the Fold : Declining Church Attendance", Canadian Social Trends, Autumn 1991, p. 22.
- 2- Little research has been done in the early Muslim history. A research project sponsored by the Council of Muslim Communities in the 1980's, whose findings have not been released, concentrated on Muslims who arrived in this century. The only work on pioneer Muslims, however little, is that of Hamdani. See his "Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic", Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, 1984, Vol. 5 (1).
- 3- Census of Prairie Provinces: Population and Agriculture, 1916.
- 4- In a letter to this author in 1979, Statistics Canada confirmed that Islam would be identified as a distinct religion in the 1981 census, and sought advice on how best to do it.
- 5- The demand by Muslims for equal treatment of all religions in secular, public schools was opposed by the Jews, and also criticized by one Muslim. Writing in a newspaper, Mr. Azhar Ali Khan, a former president of the Ottawa Muslim Association, challenged the mandate of Muslim leaders, warned of a backlash and proposed a hierarchy of rights - in a country that guarantees and prides itself on equality of rights - based on the numerical strength of religious groups. See his, False Assumptions : Media wrong to suggest religious group has single, authorized view, The Ottawa Citizen, May 3, 1994, p. A9.
- 6- This section is drawn from Daood Hassan Hamdani, "Unemployment among Muslim Canadians and the Public Policy Response", a paper presented at the City University of New York, New York, October, 1989.

7- *Ibid.*

- 8- For examples of the Human Rights Commission's work, see Daood Hassan Hamdani, "Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic", Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, 1984, 5 (1). For details, see the Commission's annual reports.
- 9- Department of Employment and Immigration (new Department of Human Resources), Canada, Employment Equity Act, Annual Report, 1989, p. 71, Table 8, Ottawa : Supply and Services. 1989.
- 10- Statistics Canada, Religions in Canada. 1991 Census (Catalog No. 93-319)
- 11- The author's estimate derived from Statistics Canada, Census 1986: Profile of Ethnic Groups (Catalogue No. 93-154).
- 12- This section draws heavily on Daood Hassan Hamdani, "Income Disparity between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Canada", Journal Institute of Minority Affairs, 1986, Vol. 7(1).
- 13- Pension is generally not portable in the private sector. Pension credits accumulated at one firm are lost when the worker moves to another firm.
- 14- The relationship between cultural traits and spending patterns is discussed in Kristian Palda, "A Comparison of Consumer Expenditure in Ontario and Quebec, Canadian journal of Economics and Political Science, February, 1967.
- 15- Daood Hassan Hamdani, "Income Disparity between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada", Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, Vol. 7 (1), 1986.
- 16- These arrangements are designed to help finance transactions in conformity with the Islamic injunction prohibiting rib'a. They rely on equity rather than debt as the means to finance. For a simple exposition of these concepts in English, see Abbas Mirakhor, "Theory of an Islamic Financial System" in Baqir Al-

- Hasani and Abbas Mirakhor (ed.) Essays on Iqtisad (Silver Spring, Md. NUR Corp., 1989)
- 17- For a description of how these co-operatives work, see Ibrahim Abusharif, "The Rise and Demand for the Muslim Housing Co-operative", *Islamic Horizons*, March/April, 1990.
 - 18- A list of incorporated, voluntary, non-profit organizations, including Muslim associations, with addresses and telephones numbers, can be found in *Directory of Associations in Canada* (Toronto: Micromedia). In addition, there are numerous unincorporated Muslim associations.
 - 19- A prime example of this is the Report from the National Commission on the role of Council of Muslim Communities of Canada in the Eighties. n.d.
 - 20- Heritage buildings cannot be altered without government approval.
 - 21- *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 30, 1991, p. C4.
 - 22- Submission by Qasem Mahmud, Chair, Islamic Schools Federation of Ontario, to the Commission on Learning, November 15, 1993.
 - 23- Problems faced by some of these schools are illustrated in Carolyn Abraham, "Ottawans Muslim school rides a rocky road", *The Ottawa Citizen*, October 2, 1993, pp. A1 and B1.
 - 24- *The Ottawa Citizen*, "The court rules Lord's prayer out of school", August 14, 1992, p. A3.
 - 25- *The Ottawa Citizen*, "Religious courses count towards diploma", February 18, 1993, p. B6.
 - 26- Kevin Cox, "Holy war of the rock", *The Globe and Mail*, March 26, 1994, p. D2.
 - 27- The Chair of the Canadian Committee for the Year of the Family stated in an open letter to Canadians : "Together, we will emphasize the functions families perform as a financial,

- nurturing, protective, educating and cultural unit and how crucial that is in the development of individual members and their contribution to Canadian society".
- 28- This section draws heavily on Daood Hassan Hamdani, "Muslim Family in Canada", inaugural address at the annual convention of the Council of Muslim Communities of Canada, Toronto, May, 1981.
 - 29- The author's estimate derived from Statistics Canada, Census 1986: Profile of Ethnic Groups (Catalog No. 93 - 154)
 - 30- Statistics used in this paragraph are derived from the matrimonial columns of the *Islamic Horizon*, over a period of three years.

CHAPTER III

Islam in the USA

by

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1 - Introduction

One of the dominant historical events of the West is its conquest of the American continent starting 1492. This conquest was fought on cultural, political and religious grounds. The Anglo-French rivalries were rooted in the European conflicts between Protestantism and Catholicism, between benevolent despotism and absolute monarchy, and later, by the 18th Century, between the-ideals of revolutionary France and the autocracy of Georgian England. Thus, during the entire colonial era, the political mapping of the Americas was constructed on the strength of one political power in Europe or another.

Though the English and the French were late in coming to the American Continent, their arrival changed the equation of sharing between European powers the bounties of "land of plenty". The dark forces of domination began and as the physical terrain was conquered and tamed, the conquerors began to put their ideological stamp upon the conquered and subjugated peoples. Neither French nor English America did recognize the existence of the indigenous people or other ethnic or cultural groups.

As USA was established in 1776, it became a melting pot of immigrants. However, this philosophy of inclusion did not embrace the indigenous peoples nor the non-European minorities created by the slave trade or by the coming of the non-European immigrants. A sense of the shared European past, a celebrated White heritage had started to inform the mind of the American literati, who had become the champions of liberal democracy, that the non-Whites, cannot be included as an integral part of the new republic. Ironically, both the indigenous population and the non-European immigrants sought to retain their cultural past and resisted integration to the main fabric of American life.

That was then, but now USA is struggling to absorb its entire population into one large family by giving new meanings to what one needs to be an "American". It is not within the scope of this paper to examine the challenges and evaluate the accommodations made to confront those challenges, by which people in war against each other were brought together and the occasional psychological wounds healed. It must, nonetheless, be pointed out that in constructing the history of Islam in USA and tracing the formation of its Muslim community, we are engaged in presenting one of the most essential chapters of the American experience.

Today, religious indifference is on the rise in the USA-. In 1952, only a mere 2% of the American population were without any religious preference. By 1989, this percentage rose to over-10% (1).

Despite this religious decline, the USA is still one of those countries in the West where religion plays a major role in the lives of ordinary people. In this milieu, where morality is still given the highest value, Islam, as a moral force, finds a fertile soil for its rapid growth. Akbar S. Ahmad is right to conclude that "we need therefore a new frame of reference. It can no longer be seen as Islam versus the West; it is Islam and the West or Islam in the West" (2).

Unlike the European experience, which was always confrontational, Muslims in America grow under a friendlier climate until the intensification of the Israeli aggression of the 1960's, the oil crisis of the 1970's and the taking over of the US Embassy in the post-revolutionary Iran of the early 1980's. Americans know very little about Islam, and they cannot be blamed for this, as they tend to be little interested in anything that does not concern them directly. Only in the latter half of the 20th Century have Americans begun to look at the Muslims as the essential "other" who happen to sit on a major portion of the rich "oil-wells", a vital source of their energy needs.

The relationship of the USA to the Muslim world is based purely on personal interests. If it is hostile to Libya, Sudan, Syria, Iraq and Iran ; and uses Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Kuwait and Pakistan as ready allies to protect their interests in Africa and Asia. Moreover, their relationship with Iran and Iraq turned foul only in recent decades. Morocco, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia maintain a cordial relationship. In fact, much of the animosity of the USA towards the Muslims and Islam is imported from Europe.

The USA does not share Christian Europe's experience with the Crusades nor does it share its colonial past. Furthermore, unlike Europe where racism and bigotry are evident both at the private and public levels, in the USA of the 1990's the individual is better protected by constitutional laws than anywhere else in the West. Muslims, too, for the first time in several centuries, are asserting

themselves and projecting their contributions in the building of modern USA.

2 - The Earliest Muslims In The USA

Muslim presence in the American Continent is, at least, as old as the visit of Columbus and the first Spanish conquerors. Historians today are uncovering details of Columbus' mission and finding out that a few Arab and African Muslim sailors, were among his crew, including the navigator of his flagship, when he first landed in the Americas.

Some scholars suggest that African and Arab Muslims were already in America long before Columbus. "When the Spanish conquistadors arrived, they found tribes of African Muslims dispersed all over the New World. The largest African colony was a permanent settlement at Darien where Balboa who saw them in 1513 reported them at war with neighboring Indians" (3).

Quoting from the Annals of al-Mas'udi, Armco World claims that the first Muslims to touch the shores of the Americas came as early as 942 (4).

Another important evidence is provided by the narrative about Andalucian Muslims who frequented the New-World from Al-Ushbuna (Lisbon) in the 12th Century. It was written by Al-Idrissi who relates the adventures of eighty maghrurin (fooled ones) from Lisbon during the reign of Yusuf ibn Tashfin, the Almoravid. These young men, it is narrated, visited about fourteen islands. Later geographers located over half of them in the Canary and the Azores. The islands, which could not be mapped, are believed to have been in the Caribbean.

Harold G. Lawrence suggests that "Africans voyaged across the Atlantic before the era of Christopher Columbus... We can now positively state that the Mandingos of the Mali and Songhay Empires,

and possibly other Africans crossed the Atlantic to carry on trade with the Western Hemisphere Indians" (5). Muslim kings from Mali initiated several expeditions to the American Continent in the early part of the 13th Century. Also, the "Sung Document" from 12th Century China mentions Muslim sailors braving the seas to a far off distant land, known as Mu-Lan-Pi, or perhaps Mei-Guo (Beautiful Land), the modern day Chinese name for America.

"Moreover, Dr. Lansine Kaba mentions that Columbus had in his possession a copy of the book of Al-Idrissi, a 13th Century Arab scholar, who mentioned in his book the discovery of a new continent by eight Muslim explorers (6).

Already in the 1920's, Leo Wiener, from Harvard University, conducted a comparative linguistic study of languages in West Sudan (Africa) and Mexico (Latin America). Nyang points out that ; "Instead of relying on Arabic literary fragments to develop his case for a pre-Colombian Muslim arrival in the New World, Leo Wiener based his conclusions on linguistic evidence derived from an analysis of the languages in Mexico and areas of Mande peoples in West Sudan" (7). The study revealed that Muslims from West Africa and the Mande region must have been in direct contact with the Mexicans, for a long time, in order to develop the degree of linguistic similarities that Wiener traced.

Historical records indicate that a Moroccan Muslim guide for the Franciscan friar, Marcos de Niza, named Estevanico of Azamor, landed in Florida in 1527. In the next ten years, till he was killed in 1539 by Indians, Estevanico was among those who set the foundations of Arizona and New Mexico.

Later, at the time of the Spanish Armada of 1587, a shipload of Muslim Moriscos (Andalucian Muslims) landed in South Carolina and settled in coastal towns, in Eastern Tennessee and along the western belt of North Carolina mountains. These people later came to be known as the "The Melungeons". (8).

Brent Kennedy argues that "The Mellungeons, though most today are Christians, are the living legacy of Islam's first wave of immigrants to the New World" (8). Kennedy mentions that among the so-called Mayan Indians, Columbus observed women who "covered their faces like the women of Granada". For Kennedy, these were Muslim women who must have settled among the Mayan Indians before the coming of Christian Europeans.

Another notable early Muslim, of the 16th Century, whose name needs to be mentioned is Nasruddin. He is presented as a person who was involved with a Mohawk princess (9).

3 - The Formation of the US Muslim Community

Historians agree that so far there have been three waves of Muslim arrivals in the American Continent, ignoring the voyages made before Columbus and the records on individual Muslims and their group activities in the centuries immediately after, as mentioned above.

The first wave was initiated by European colonizers in the early part of the 17th Century. Among the Africans who were caged and brought by shiploads, there were many Muslims. Early 17th Century literature of colonial America reveals many references to "Muhammedan" slaves. It also indicates that there were many slaves who spoke Arabic among themselves, could write and read it, refused to eat pork and refrained from using foul language, as was common among the frustrated slaves. Even in captivity these enslaved people tried to retain the moral values and the teachings of Islam and demonstrated their literacy by memory of the Arabic language. Austin argues that 10% to 15% of the slaves brought to North America were Muslims (10) According to other estimates, "as many as one-fifth of all the slaves introduced into the Americas" may have been Muslims (11).

As an example, Ayub Sulaiman ibn Diallo is mentioned as a slave in Maryland in 1730. He seems to be an educated person as several of his letters written in Arabic reflect his command of the language. He is also credited for translating Arabic coin inscriptions for the British Museum (12). Also, Charles Peales' Diary published in 1837 reveals the struggle and misfortunes of a Muslim named Yarrow Mamout, who after being freed from slavery at the ripe of age of 89, settled in the Washington, D.C., area in the 1700's. He was a well-known figure in the Georgetown section of Washington.

The first loss that these enslaved Muslims suffered was the destruction of their cultural heritage. Though, open practice of any religion was forbidden by the White Christian Colonialists, the first few generations of African Muslims protected and practiced their religion in their private lives. Case studies of the "Moors" living in the Carolinas unveil the existence of Islam in the South, early in the 1700's. Besides, chronicles and early recorded regional history of the 1800's mention the presence of individual Arab and Turkish travelers along the eastern and southeastern coastal states of what later became the USA.

The second wave came mainly from the Arab world. And since this area was predominantly part of the Ottoman-Empire, immigrating Turks could also be considered as part of this wave which started in the later part of the 18th Century and continued until World War I in 1914.

These Muslims initially came with the purpose of making some money and returning to their homeland. They had no intention to settle in America permanently. The economic difficulties of America in the 1800's prevented them from prospering. Most of them, as Haddad and Smith point out were "migrant laborers, peddlers, and petty traders" (13). Thus having failed to make a fortune, most of these Muslims finally settled down in America and abandoned the idea of going back home. They formed the first pockets of Muslim

settlements in various parts of USA, hardly recognizable from others. The main areas of their first concentration were in Dearborn (Michigan), Quincy (Massachusetts), and Rose (North Dakota). As they settled, they had to be contented with petty jobs or started small businesses.

These early settlers were not very practicing Muslims, but as social interactions brought them closer, their Islamic self-awareness began to take a gradual hold. Thus, as Haddad and Smith (13) argue, the creation of Islamic centers and mosques became a social necessity. As a result, "the construction of buildings to serve as mosques or Islamic centers began in the 1920's and 1930's; by 1952 there were over twenty mosques that joined in the formation of the Federation of Islamic Associations of America... By 1992 there were over 2,300 Islamic institutions in North America including mosques, schools, community centers, publishing houses, and media programming units" (14). Presently, in the 1990's, in almost every university town, there is a mosque; in almost every major city there is an Islamic center; and some major urban areas like Washington, DC, New York, Los Angeles and Chicago have over two hundred mosques and more than a dozen Islamic centers.

The third wave came mainly from Asia, especially from the Indian subcontinent. It began with the emergence of independent nations and the disintegration of the British Empire in Asia, in the early 1950's. This wave continues until the present day.

This is a dramatic development for a community that has only been active for a little more than seventy years in the USA. If the growth of the Muslim Community is to be judged "by the mosques" as Akbar S. Ahmad probes (2), then the Muslims of the USA have achieved tremendously compared to Europe. Furthermore, American Muslims, like other citizens, are free to move or settle in any part of the USA.

Centuries of discrete presence have enabled the Muslims to emerge today as an important religious minority in the USA. It is important to

ponder upon the gains they have made in the last century, from scattered individuals to a group highly visible in the country. For example, Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb, a US diplomat who embraced Islam while on duty in the Philippines, was the only Muslim speaker to represent Islam at the first Parliament for the World's Religions in 1893. Webb is considered by Muslim Historians as the earliest prominent "Anglo" to convert to Islam in the USA. All other presentations about Islam were made by Christian missionaries and in the customary fashion in which they distorted it. A century later, in 1993, at the second Parliament for the World's Religions in Chicago, Muslim speakers received the share of time they deserved, and Muslim organizations were major players in the planning committees.

The present century has seen an unprecedented growth of the Muslim Community. Today, it is the fastest growing community in North America. "Between 1971 and 1981 the Muslim population grew from 1,000,000 (0.5% of the total population) to about 3,000,000 (1.3% of the total population). Of these some 1,000,000 were of African origin, 900,000 of Arab origin, 450,000 of Indo-Pakistan origin and 450,000 from elsewhere. By the early 1992, it was estimated that there was a total of 6,000,000 Muslims in the US" (15). Various estimates in 1994 of the number of Muslims in the US range from 4 to 10 million. By the first decade of the next century, Muslims will constitute the largest religious minority in the USA.

The larger bulk of the Muslim population will always be those who came from Africa. According to an estimate of the American Muslim Council of Washington, DC, there were six million Muslims in the USA in 1993. This estimate was comprised of the following ratio; African American 42.0%, South Asian 24.4%, Arab 12.4%, African 5.2%, Iranian 3.6%, Turk 2.4%, Southeast Asian 2.0%, Caucasian American 1.6%, and the "Undetermined" group constituted the remaining 5.6% (11).

During the last three decades especially, there has been a phenomenal growth of the Muslim community in the USA. It has not only expanded numerically, but also socially, culturally and economically. The Muslim community is actively building institutions in the USA which reflects its creative genius and affirms its healthy growth.

The Muslims in the USA come from two sources : the foreign immigrants, mainly from Asia and Africa, and local converts. Among the immigrants, the first batch represents once young, brilliant students who came only for a limited period of time in pursuit of knowledge but then gradually decided to settle in the country. This group has achieved a tremendous success in various walks of life, and many of its members now actively take part in building the institutions of the Muslim Community.

The other source represents the indigenous Muslims, predominantly African-Americans having embraced Islam in large numbers, many through Elijah Muhammad who started his mission in the 1930's. Elijah Muhammad played a crucial role in inviting African-Americans to their lost heritage of Islam and in giving them a sense of dignity and purpose.

Today, these two important Muslim streams continue to work both independently and jointly. They need much more coordination, as they represent two aspects of Muslim personality and two experiences of history, but together form one Ummah.

4 - The Nation of Islam

The revival of Islam in modern America came initially from the African-American community. Indeed Islam became a potent liberating political force to the African-Americans. It enabled them to have a proud and separate identity, which they desperately needed to

confront the forces that deprived them of their basic human rights and their legitimate share in a nation they helped build.

Even after 1865, when the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution which prohibited slavery in the United States, was ratified, the African-Americans found themselves treated as "the other" in a country they still could not call their own.

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation liberated African-Americans only on paper, but the harsh realities on the ground remained more or less the same. Returning American soldiers of African descent, at the end of World War I, found themselves treated once again as aliens in a nation for which they had gone to sacrifice their lives. The African-Americans felt betrayed and terribly marginalized. Therefore, the race riots of 1919 were an important turning point in African-American history.

Many African-Americans began to realize that the only alternative to their miserable condition was either to establish a separate African American state carved out of mainland USA or to emigrate back to Africa. A general consensus was beginning to grow among the silent African-American majority that their suffering was the result of a new form of oppression under a nonchalant White majority rule. Thus, a two-pronged movement began to take place in the Black America of the 1920's.

On the one hand, the African-Americans stood up to resist the Whites for their own political space, and on the other they started to explore their glorious African past. It was in Africa that the African-Americans found their connections with Islam. Islam, however, did not come to them as a spiritual faith only that changes life from within, but it also came as a political/social force which could help them confront the predominantly White West.

The African-Americans felt that they have to establish their own space for their survival within the boundaries of the USA. They needed to re-write their own history in order to infuse dignity and self

respect which is essential for their progress. Some believed in having only a symbolic relationship with their African heritage and still remain American in their lifestyle. While others sought to go back to their original past and renounce everything they have been thrust upon by the oppressing White man, even his religion.

Thus two parallel movements emerged among them in the early 20th Century ; one part of the African-American community remained Christian and demanded integration with mainstream America ; while the other part opposed integration and chose Islam as their original religion.

Timothy Drew, who later became Noble Drew Ali (1886-1922), discovered Islam as the ultimate refuge of the African-Americans. Drew "had become acquainted with certain phases of Islamic teachings, and became convinced that Islam was the only instrument for Negro unity and advancement" (16). With this in mind, he established the first Moorish-American Science Temple, in Newark, New Jersey, in 1913. Drew Ali sowed the seed of an idea that the "Negroes" in the USA are not "Americans" but they are descendants of the Moors whose forefathers lived in Morocco prior to being brought as slaves to North America. Drew Ali felt that "Christianity was for Europeans and Islam was for people of African descent" (17). Essien-Udom argues that Drew Ali "not only denied the affinity of Negroes to the White center of power, but he also attempted to differentiate them from their "negro-ness" or from their subculture" (18). Drew Ali's leadership was eventually challenged from within his group and in the struggle that followed he landed in jail on murder charges on March 15, 1929. A few weeks later, while on bail, Drew Ali died of reasons not very well known. The idea survived, however, as it was carried out by the "Nation of Islam".

The "Nation of Islam" took its birth as a "separatist movement between 1914 and 1930, when the social conditions were unusually oppressive, creating discontent among people of African descent in

the United States" (19). Its founder, Wali Fard (1877-1934), believed, and wanted other African-Americans to believe, that they can never achieve actual freedom nor receive equal justice in a predominantly white Christian America.

Both Wali Fard, and his successor, Elijah Muhammad's chief concern was to achieve mental freedom for their people. After being brutally colonized for centuries, the African-Americans have lost their vision for progress. They were doubly disadvantaged. First, they could not participate in mainstream American life because of the socio-political prejudices of the White American people who lived in separate communities. Second, having no capital nor a unified monetary base, it was impossible for them to survive on their own in segregated communities within the borders of one nation.

To label the "Nation of Islam" as a "religious separatist organization" (20) is, therefore, a distortion of facts because basically it was not only a religious movement. Neither Wali Fard nor Elijah Muhammad's main objectives were to introduce the religion of Islam as it was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (S) in Makkah and Madinah, over 1400 years ago.

Wali Fard ambition was to establish, at least symbolically, a new "nation" for the African-American and to shield them with the powerful symbol of "Islam". African-Americans were taught that the ruling White community prevented them from uniting and progressing. Wali Fard defined Islam as the "natural religion" for the African people in North America.

Interestingly enough, Wali Fard who set out to provide a new identity for the African-Americans had initially struggled to find his own identity. He defined himself in many ways and used many names ; Wali Farrad, Farrad Muhammad, F. Muhammad Ali, Professor Fard, W. Fard Muhammad, and even "God-in-person", or Allah. It is important to understand that the quest for an identity

remained an essential element in the lives of the African-Americans, for a greater part of the 20th Century.

African-Americans were indeed a separate nation within the USA but had no lands to own nor a place to belong to. Wali Fard understood the "Negro Dilemma" but was himself its victim. He first tried to build on the legacy of Drew Ali and claimed that he was his reincarnation. Then he personified himself as "God" so that he could replace the concept of the "White Man" as God, and thus set the African-American people mentally free.

The political rhetoric of Wali Fard and his appeal to his people to have a totally separate sense of belonging worked wonders. "It has been estimated that between 1930 and 1934, Fard recruited eight thousand followers among Detroit Negroes. The rapid growth of the first Temple was accompanied by the establishment of various subsidiary organizations, among which was the University of Islam for the training of "Moslem" youth and families in the "knowledge of our own" as distinct from that of the "civilization of the Caucasian Devils" (21). The insistence on creating one's own institution to promote a counter history and a counter culture filled the vacuum in the imagination of the African-American people. Wali Fard's misfortune was that his message could not reach a lot of people, but to those it reached it has captivated their minds.

Wali Fard rebelled against the entire order of the American system and immediately severed all his ties with his immediate present. He began to claim that he was an Arab of royal ancestry. Haddad and Smith further raise the question that Wali Fard could probably be either Turkish or Iranian by origin. He began to show a natural conflict between the White race and the Afro-Asian people. He also began to insist that there was an inborn rivalry between Christianity and Islam. Then, Wali Fard concluded that as Blacks and as Original Muslims, the African-Americans can never expect fairness and justice under the law of the White Christians. Fard's rhetoric intensified to a

point that he began to identify himself and his people as the "Chosen Ones" who have been in an eternal fight with the "White Man" whom he labeled as the "Devil". Fard went a step further to emphasize that "this conflict would ultimately be resolved through the Battle of Armageddon, which he defined as a religious war between Muslims and Christians" (22).

Fard's message gave the African-American people a sense of identity, a sense of purpose and a dignified role to play in their struggle against oppression. This struggle had to be fought in almost every sphere of life: social, economical, political, and on the spiritual and psychological levels as well. The African-Americans needed to rediscover their lost and glorious past and re-establish a dignified existence in the present world.

Having successfully planted the seeds of a separate African-American community in the consciousness of his small but extremely devoted group, Wali Fard mysteriously disappeared in 1934. The leadership of the "Nation of Islam", which he founded in Detroit in 1930, automatically fell in the hands of Elijah Muhammad.

Wali Fard transformed the life of Elijah Poole, gave him the name "Kareem", although he eventually adopted the name Elijah Muhammad (1898-1975), in return Elijah Muhammad, developed the dream of Wali Fard, "the Nation of Islam", into a powerful national organization for the African-Americans.

Elijah Muhammad's total devotion to Wali Fard and his knowledge of the Bible enabled him to have a prominent place in his inner circle, so much so, that in a very short amount of time he was appointed as the Chief Minister of "the Nation of Islam" and was poised to succeed him. By the time Wali Fard disappeared in 1934, Elijah Muhammad had both the control of "the Nation of Islam" and simultaneously possessed the skills to administer it.

When Elijah Muhammad took the leadership of the "Nation of Islam", not all of Fard's followers joined him. A minor split took place

within the movement. Abdul Muhammad, one of Fard's notable ministers organized a group which declared its loyalties to the US Constitution and broke away from the "Nation of Islam", leaving Elijah Muhammad to pursue his policies of segregation.

Elijah Muhammad's immediate task was to restructure the administration of the "Nation of Islam" and create a close-knit family based on a strict chain of command. Marsh explains: "Muhammad appointed ministers of each temple, he also appointed supreme captains who were responsible to him. Beneath the supreme captains were captains, then first, second and third lieutenants. The temples were not autonomous ; all orders had to be cleared through Elijah Muhammad" (23) This rigid structure was an absolute necessity. Each member was an obedient link in a long chain of command. In a hostile environment, the enemies could be within as well as outside; Elijah Muhammad could not take any chances and risk the future of his people.

Elijah Muhammad came to realize the significance of "unity" among his people and therefore subjected them to a rigorous regimentation. For the next four decades since 1934, until his death in Chicago on 26 February, 1975, Elijah Muhammad led the "Nation of Islam" in such a way that its presence was being felt, if not anywhere at least in the inner cities.

The "Black Muslims" began to witness "many healthy changes in their own lives and in the lives of a very large number of fellow Blacks as a result of the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and of the association with his movement, the "Nation of Islam" (24).

Before examining Elijah Muhammad's strategies and leadership skills, it is important to understand the fundamental beliefs he preached to the members of the "Nation of Islam". First, like his mentor Wali Fard, he preached absolute separation. However, unlike Fard, he believed in a struggle that would provide his people their own legitimate space in the USA. He argued : "We have as much right to

the soil as the White man. Why should we claim the land of our Black brother in Africa; our destiny is right here in America" (25) But while demanding land, Elijah Muhammad advocated a complete withdrawal from White America. In order to achieve this, he had to create an economic alternative and a system of self-reliance among his people. This attitude made the "Nation of Islam" de-link itself from the nationalist struggle that was being simultaneously waged by non-Muslim African-Americans, although there was no apparent tensions between the two movements. All African Americans had one common enemy, racial discrimination, and one common demand, fair treatment and justice in a racially biased "White" America.

Elijah Muhammad developed the "University of Islam" established by Wali Fard in Detroit in 1930. This institution offered schooling from grades 4 through 12 and provided an alternative to the public school system in Michigan. However, Elijah Muhammad met a strong resistance from the Government. The Detroit Board of Education arrested him and his teaching staff on charges of contributing "to the delinquency of minors". Then, they made an attempt to shut down the "University" and compel the students to get back into the public school system.

The purpose of the "University of Islam" was to train the minds of African-American Muslim children, especially the boys, in an organizational unit which Elijah Muhammad called the "Fruit of Islam". The girls were to be trained in accordance to what was called the "Laws of Islam". Both boys and girls, were taught African-American history and Islamic studies, in addition to mathematics, languages and sciences, as offered in the public system of education. The "Nation of Islam" also offered classes for adult members. However, studies in Islam were neither traditional nor orthodox. It was an "Islamic" education mostly created and interpreted by Elijah Muhammad. Nevertheless, the "University of Islam" began a process

of decolonization in the education of the African-Americans and started to indoctrinate its pupils on the superiority of the African race.

Much of Elijah Muhammad's ideology was Afrocentric in nature. His belief in Wali Fard as "God-in-Person", was emphasis on an African as "God". His insistence that he was a messenger, in contradiction to Prophet Muhammad (S) as the last Messenger of Allah (SWT), was to create an African hierarchy in the divine order of existence. Elijah Muhammad was aware of these contradictions and in a private interview (26) confessed of his departure from real Islam, but his Afrocentricity was so extreme that he was not prepared to acknowledge even Islam beyond the boundaries of the African continent. When it was pointed out to him that what he was preaching is not Islam, Elijah Muhammad explained that the African-Americans have been so much corrupted by Western civilization that it will take time for them to understand and comprehend fully the teachings of the Qur'an and the message of Islam. He further asserted that at the moment, African-Americans cannot understand the significance nor practice the kind of discipline which Islam demands. But he went on to assure that a time will come when someone, who will understand real Islam, will one day lead the African-American people into the fold of true Islam (27).

Building on the mission of his predecessors, Noble Drew Ali and Wali Fard, Elijah Muhammad at least succeeded in making his portion of the African-American community to reject Western civilization and Christianity as a part of an alien culture. He also made them resist imperialism and look for solidarity eastward towards Asia, Africa and the Third World. He also succeeded in implementing moral values on his people. Men were prohibited from drinking alcohol and from gambling. Women were made to wear long dresses, cover their heads by scarves and not wear any makeup. Both men and women were also made to follow rigid dietary rules, and asked to avoid pork (28). Ansari stresses "the wholesome influence of Elijah Muhammad was

evident in their improved economic conditions, the stability of their family life, their enhanced prestige in society, and even in their robust and elegant demeanor" (29).

Islam for Elijah Muhammad was "The Way Out" for the African-American community's miserable socio-political condition. In this regard he declared: "Islam dignifies the Black Man, and it gives him the desire to be clean, internally and externally, and to have for the first time a sense of dignity" (30). Thus in about four decades of Elijah Muhammad's leadership, the "Nation of Islam" became a powerful African-American organization.

Moreover, it has produced some major African-American Muslim leader. In fact, these leaders gained the spotlight of "the Nation of Islam", so much so that the question of succession to Elijah Muhammad became very intriguing. W. D. Muhammad, being Elijah Muhammad's son, was the best choice. However, he began leaning towards orthodox Islam and started to disagree with his father. He went in and out of the "Nation of Islam" several times.

The greatest success of Elijah Muhammad is that he has not only established an organization but he has also institutionalized it. He has succeeded in shaping such a hierarchy within the "Nation of Islam" that, for each member, loyalty to one's immediate leader was almost always above the "self". There was a general consensus among the members that any minister in Elijah Muhammad's inner circle would be both worthy and capable of leadership.

In such a "competition-free" environment, it should not have been surprising when on February 26, 1975, a day after Elijah Muhammad's death, it was announced that W. D. Muhammad was designated to lead the "Nation of Islam", which has by then become a full-bodied organization, reaching almost all major US cities, and having a membership of over 100,000.

5 - The Return to Orthodox Islam

As the first wave of Muslim student immigrants from Islamic heartlands came to the USA in the early 1950's, they looked at the "Nation of Islam" movement with curiosity. But these Muslims were not in a position either to confront it or to contradict it. In such circumstances the "Nation of Islam" grew steadily without any opposition from Muslim scholars.

Malcolm Little (1925 - 1965) contact with Elijah Muhammad brought about a psychological metamorphosis in him. His conversion to Islam took place in prison, due to the efforts of members of the "Nation of Islam", while he was serving a six-year term. He was released in August, 1952, and immediately went on to work for Elijah Muhammad.

His first defiance was to drop his surname of "Little", given to his family by the slave-masters. But unlike others, he attached a metaphysical dimension to his African-American identity by adding the mysterious power of the letter "X" as his last name. He started on a life-long quest for truth. As one discovery led to another, the African American separatist in Malcolm X gave way to a universalist as he accepted the message of Orthodox Islam. The differences between Malcolm X and the "Nation of Islam" led him to a break on March 8, 1964 from both the "Nation of Islam" and Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm X found Orthodox Islam after performing the Hajj in 1964. He renamed himself for the last time as Malik El-Shabazz. Malcolm's wife, Betty Shabazz, describes her husband's transformation in these words: "He went to Mecca as a Black Muslim and there he became only a Muslim. He felt that all men were human beings ; we must judge a man on his deeds". (30).

In the 12 years that Malcolm X worked for Elijah Muhammad, his dynamic leadership has put the "Nation of Islam" on the map. Malcolm X became more known, both in and outside the USA, than

any other African American leader. His concrete contributions to the "Nation of Islam" can hardly be exaggerated. Marsh explains, that "he increased the membership from 400 to 40,000 in the few years after he joined". (31). Malcolm X revolutionized the way African-Americans perceived Islam in their lives. He captured the essence of Orthodox Islam and delivered it to his people. He believed that only Islam can provide them the freedom that they are looking for.

No wonder why, some very close associates of Elijah Muhammad became alarmed of Malcolm X unprecedented power within the organization, and started a process to eclipse him. Malcolm X was gunned down at Audubon Ballroom in New York City on February 21, 1965. Malcolm X has drastically indeed changed the way Islam was preached and practiced within the African-American community in the 20th Century. Malcolm's own biography in collaboration with Alex Haley, published in 1964 (32) added a new perspective towards the understanding of Orthodox Islam among college going African-Americans.

The transition of Elijah's "Nation of Islam" into the community of Muslims under his chosen son, Imam W. D. Mohammed, has few parallels in Islamic history. Sons are known to perpetuate the heresies of fathers, especially when they bring rich dividends. Imam W. D. Mohammad has done just the reverse.

Since he succeeded his father in the leadership of the "Nation of Islam" W. D. Muhammad had the fortune to be followed by the largest group that fragmented from it. He disagreed with his father openly during his lifetime regarding his ideas and doctrines about Orthodox Islam. Therefore, as soon as he succeeded him, he immediately started leading his members towards Orthodox Islam. His first move was to change his first name of "Wallace" to "Warith", and with great zest began the reformation and the restructuring of the "Nation of Islam" on the lines of Orthodox Islam.

Change was not easy, African-Americans were so disenchanted that it was difficult for W. D. Muhammad to attract them towards a universal Islam that demanded from them more rigorous discipline than they were used to under Elijah Muhammad. Nonetheless, W. D. Muhammad was determined to give his people the true picture of Islam. Once again the question of a proper identity surfaced in the organization. W. D. Muhammad changed the name of his group to the "World Community of Islam in the West" in 1976. As a more proper label was needed, the name was further changed into the "American Muslim Mission" in 1980. For W. D. Muhammad it seemed that everything was "in the name", and rightly so. He felt an immediate need to accomplish a dual mission ; (1) to distance his group as far away as possible from the beliefs of the "Nation of Islam" ; and (2) to integrate his people into the rest of the Ummah. Moreover, W. D. Muhammad followers ceased to be Black Muslims. They called themselves "Bilalians", styled after the first African Muslim, and a prominent Sahabi, Bilal Ibn Rabah, of Abyssinia, or they simply called themselves "Muslims", like the rest of the Ummah.

Change was also brought to the names of the newspapers that the "Nation" published. Elijah Muhammad's "Muhammad Speaks" was changed to "Muslim World News", giving it an international dimension. In the years ahead several more changes took place. The paper became "Bilalian News", then the "American Muslim Journal", and finally the "Muslim Journal". It is important to note these changes, as each name reflects a short transition towards Orthodox Islam.

Major ideological changes that W. D. Muhammad brought to the "Nation of Islam" were the rejection of the beliefs that Wali Fard was "Allah incarnate" or that Elijah Muhammad was the "Messenger of Allah". Instead, W. D. Muhammad established the true Shahadah by making his people declare "there is no god but Allah (SWT) and that Prophet Muhammad (S) was his last Messenger". Both Wali Fard and Elijah Muhammad were stripped of their divine claims.

In the same spirit, fasting in December was changed to the month of Ramadan, with the rest of the Ummah. He also implemented the Salah timings according to the dictates of Islam. Moreover, within the Mosques now referred to as Masjids, racist slogans were replaced by Surahs from the Qur'an, written in Arabic. Finally, Elijah Muhammad's self-made dietary laws were substituted by the dietary laws of Islam, in accordance to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Having achieved all this, W. D. Muhammad surprisingly gave up his spiritual leadership of the "Nation of Islam" and became a minister-at-large in 1978. W. D. Muhammad's greatest contribution to the Muslim community of African origin was that as he made them Orthodox Muslims, he also brought them out of segregation by eliminating the political rhetoric against the White race and against the USA. All these changes were possible because Imam W. D. Muhammad understood the true message of Islam and adopted it in his daily life. This self-awareness combined with his education in Al-Azhar University (Cairo, Egypt), made him into one of the authentic representatives of Islam in the USA. Today, despite their independent and local leadership, most Islamic centers and mosques in the African-American community follow the national leadership of W. D. Muhammad.

6 - Heterodox Afro-American Muslims

As W. D. Muhammad took over, the "Nation of Islam" underwent several fragmentations. Some of these fragments could not approve of W. D. Muhammad's reconstruction of the organization and his leanings towards Orthodox Islam. Therefore, regrouping took place on two major grounds ; those who wanted to follow the teachings of Elijah Muhammad ; and those who sought to reconstruct a new organization and follow Orthodox Islam.

Four "Nations" came into being immediately after the death of Elijah Mohammed led each by ; (1) John Mohammad in Detroit, the blood brother of Elijah Muhammad ; (2) Silas Muhammad in Atlanta ; (3) Emmanuel Abdullah Muhammad in Baltimore ; and last but not the least, (4) Louis Farrakhan in Chicago. Yet there were few other groups such as "Calistran" and the "Five Percenters", claiming the "Nation of Islam" as their mother organization.

Both Elijah Muhammad and John Muhammad simultaneously joined the "Nation of Islam" in 1930. Both believed in the same principles and practiced their own brand of separatist Islam. After the death of Elijah Muhammad, John anchored himself in Highland Park, Michigan, publishing the newspaper "Muhammad Speaks". He continued to follow the old teachings of Wali Fard and Elijah Muhammad. His movement is confined to Detroit and he has less than a thousand card carrying members. Though the old policy of confrontation has faded over the years, the group has continued to segregate itself from other Muslim communities.

Silas Muhammad was one of Elijah Muhammad's close associates. He was appointed as a minister of the "Nation of Islam" in the West Coast. Like John Muhammad he too believes in the old school of thought in the "Nation of Nation" and publishes a newsletter using the same name of "Muhammad Speaks". However, Silas established himself in Atlanta and has a more powerful political base than John, with thousands of active members.

Emmanuel Muhammad too belongs to the old school of Elijah Muhammad. He also publishes a newsletter under the name of "Muhammad Speaks". But he has only a few hundred followers, in the Baltimore area.

As W. D. Muhammad succeeded Elijah Mohammed and began to reform the "Nation of Islam", Louis Farrakhan (born in 1933) took a back seat for a while. In 1978, he poised himself to lead the "Nation of Islam", following the footsteps of his teacher, Elijah Muhammad.

Louis Farrakhan continued his battle on many fronts. He refused to follow, Orthodox Islam and continued the rivalry against the white race and the Judeo-Christian tradition. His mosques were called temples. They were socio-political centers for the propagation of Black Nationalism. Farrakhan undercut all that W. D. Muhammad had done so far and revived with a greater passion all that Elijah Muhammad stood for.

Farrakhan's rhetoric of confrontation succeeded very well with the African-American underclass of the inner cities. He reinstated Elijah Muhammad's "Fruit of Islam" for boys and added the "Muslim Girls Training" for women. Farrakhan was once again promoting African-American separatism and nationalism. His success was assured by the huge disparity between social classes in suburban America. Farrakhan also revived a "Final Call" organization based on a newspaper of the 1930's called "The Final Call to Islam".

Resistance has already begun to isolate Farrakhan from claiming to be a Muslim while practicing a very non Muslim ideology. Moreover, since W. D. Muhammad, a respectable leader and the son of Elijah Muhammad, had chosen Orthodox Islam with all his followers, it makes it very easy to isolate Farrakhan as a separate group.

Amir Ali argued that the "Nation of Islam" under Louis Farrakhan is not Islamic. Farrakhan, Amir Ali points out, "is the champion of a new religion which exploits Islamic and Qur'anic terminology, but has very little common in beliefs and practices with Islam" (33).

Farrakhan makes a total commitment to the Shahadah and makes a "profession of faith" in accordance to Orthodox Islam only when he is in the presence of a predominantly Muslim group. But he fails to follow his own commitment and does not preach Orthodox Islam when he is with the "Nation of Islam". W. D. Muhammad has always welcomed Farrakan and even embraced him, after his unequivocal address to the Continental Muslim Council of Masajid in Chicago in 1990. In fact, Imam W. D. Muhammad constantly pleads to Louis

Farrakhan to take a direction that ceases to misrepresent the religion of Al-Islam. Thus, W. D. Muhammad and Louis Farrakhan form two powerful trends among the African-American Muslims who have agreed to choose Islam as their religion. Perhaps as the passion for politics die in Farrakhan and the "Nation of Islam", not too far in the future, both these groups may merge to form a moral force in a USA where moral values are fast diminishing.

Calistran, or Death Angels, held its meetings outside the local "Nation of Islam" temples. Though the "Nation of Islam" always distanced itself from the members of Calistran, the latter thought that their philosophy was identical to that of the "Nation of Islam". Calistran was an underground group and did not have a reconstruction project for the welfare of the African-Americans as the "Nation of Islam" did. Nonetheless, these Death Angels brought California to a halt with rampant shootings of white men, women and children in 1973.

Five Percenters was founded in Haarlem by a former Korean War veteran by the name of Clarence Jowers, or better known as Clarence X. Like Calistran, Five percenters was also a clandestine group. The only similarity of the Five Percenters with the "Nation of Islam" was that both used Islam, but unlike the verbal rhetoric of the latter, the former were a violent group. They believe in a very separatist and Afrocentric ideology. Their dominant philosophy is to arouse the African-American consciousness, so much so, that it borders on the concept of Black supremacy. They believe that 95% of humankind is on its way to destruction because of their evil and corrupt way of life. Only the Five Percenters, that is the 5% of the human race who have self-knowledge, understanding of the true God and teach the true message, will be saved.

Apart from their revolutionary zeal, the Five Percenters became a potent youth organization in which members were taught the ancient art of oratory and rhetoric. For almost two decades from 1967 to 1988,

the Five Percenters developed highly effective skills by which they communicated their political ideology to youth, especially in the Greater New York area. In recent years their rhetorical power has been used in the rap music industry to confront the establishment.

The group has its own flag of an eight-pointed star with a circle in the center and the words "In the Name of Allah" as a symbolic link to Islam. Though Clarence was murdered in 1988, the group still has a political appeal among the non-conformists in the African-American community.

7 - Muslim Immigrants in The USA Today

The USA suddenly became visible on the map for many Afro-Asian nations after World War II. A small number of Muslims, both from Africa and Asia began to arrive in the USA, primarily for higher education and advanced technical training. These cultural elites became the spokespersons for the Ummah in the USA.

The first group arrived in the 1950's. Since then each decade witnessed a gradual increase in the number of Muslims in the USA. According to Stone, Muslim immigrants have more than doubled over the last two decades, increasing from 4% of all immigrants in 1968 to 10.5% in 1986 (34). She estimates that the cumulative number of immigrants admitted to the USA was 454,448 in 1968 and 601,708 in 1986. She also presents the geographical concentration of Muslims in the USA, examines the method of estimation, and analyzes the immigration of Muslims from Muslim populated areas of the World (34).

Stone explains that "Muslims in California are largely from the Middle East/North Africa and Asia, while Muslims in New York came predominantly from East Europe and Middle East/North Africa. Muslims in Illinois are equally East European, Middle Eastern/North African, and African-American" (35, 36). Besides these three states

that Stone mentions, the Muslim population has significantly increased in Texas, Michigan, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and in Washington, D.C., in the 1990's. Moreover, the Muslim population in Los Angeles, New York City and Houston has swelled noticeably between 1991-1994 due to recent immigrations from South Asia, under OP1 and OP2 policies. In addition, Muslim professionals are spreading all over the USA, even in the less populated Northwestern and Northeastern states where there is a small but nevertheless significant Muslim presence. Islamic activities since the 1980's have greatly increased in Indiana and its neighboring state of Ohio also, because of the headquarters of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) situated in an area covering 50 hectares in Plainfield, Indiana. More importantly, these Muslims are becoming more conscious of their heritage now than they ever were previously. Even in remote small towns with small numbers of Muslims, Islamic festivals are held. In some cases, such tiny groups will even hold Friday congregation prayers in basements.

A notable aspect about Canadian Muslims is that they share a very close-knit relationship with the US Muslims. In some cases, divided families live across the border. Many Canadian Muslims send their children to study in US educational institutions. Besides, many combined projects in both religious and cultural fields are conducted between Muslim organizations of the two countries.

There is a growing number of Muslim entrepreneurs who have succeeded to qualify as millionaires. Many have contributed munificently to Islamic concerns. Some are now establishing their own trusts and charities and showing support for their favorite projects. According to one estimate, approximately 100 Muslim millionaires exist in Chicago alone.

The embassies of many Muslim states, particularly their cultural and education departments, have also participated in Islamic community development through their own communities or through

Islamic organizations. The department of religious Affairs of the Saudi Embassy actively supports Islamic work in North America. Several Islamic organizations such as the Muslim World League (Mecca), Iqra Charitable Society (Jeddah), Faisal Foundation (Riyadh), Ar-Rajhi Foundation (Riyadh), the Islamic Development Bank (Jeddah), the Islamic Solidarity Fund (Jeddah), and many other overseas philanthropies participate in the development of the Muslim community of the US through their generous assistance. The Muslim World League, founded in Makkah in 1962 as an international Muslim organization, now has its official branch in New York City through which it operates its Islamic programs in the USA. Many programs, institutions, mosques, educational projects, individual scholars and students are supported by these foundations. It should be noted that the larger role that the Arab-American community played in the US of the 1980's did no go unnoticed. On October 25, 1989, George Bush, then the US President, declared in a Congressional resolution that October 25 will be the "National Arab-American Day".

Numerous Muslim professionals in their individual and professional capacity are participating in many organizations, social and political forums, welfare and relief agencies, schools (PTA) and neighborhood projects. They are gaining influence as a viable professional force in their workplaces. Some have arranged matching grants for Islamic organizations from their companies. Their professional expertise helps community work through their personal participation or advice. Islamic work in the USA, by and large, is voluntary and part-time. However, more and more institutions are now employing full-time professionals and are becoming more organized professionally.

Islamic work and the Muslim Community Development in the USA have reached a level where coordination is imperative. Most Islamic organizations have emerged spontaneously in response to specific needs. But unfortunately, little thought has gone into the

coordination of their work for the fullest impact on the American society. There have been much scattered efforts, but no serious endeavor so far has been made to coordinate all organizations and their activities, at local, regional and national levels.

8 - Islamic Local Organizations in The USA

Probably, the first mosque in the USA was established by Muhammad Alexander Russell Webb, who was the American ambassador to the Philippines under President Cleveland. He converted to Islam and established a mosque in New York in 1895, called the Muslim Mosque.

Muslim settlers from Greater Syria formed the Islamic Association in Highland Park, Michigan, in 1919. Three years later, in 1922, another Islamic association was formed in Detroit, Michigan. By the end of the decade in 1930, the Arab-American Banner society was established in Quincy, Massachusetts.

The 1980's saw the rise of many specialized national and local organizations, alongside the intensification and multiplication of Islamic Centers (36, 37). Presently, there are over 3,000 Islamic centers covering almost all major cities of North America. Many big cities have more than one center. Table D.1 lists 1106 of these Mosques and centers per US region as given by ISNA Directory in 1992. Table 8.2 gives the numbers by state. More than the third of all mosques and Islamic Centers in the USA are located in three of the 50 US states ; New York, California and Illinois.

Table 8.1 : Mosques and Islamic Centers per US Region in 1992

Region	No. of Mosques	Main City
Central Atlantic	238	New York City
Eastern North Central	212	Chicago
South Atlantic	178	Atlanta

Following Table 8.1 : Mosques and Islamic Centers per US Region in 1992

Pacific	177	Los Angeles
Western South Central	102	Houston
Western North Central	60	Minneapolis
Mountains	56	Denver
Eastern South Central	53	New Orleans
New England	30	Boston
Total	1106	

Koszegi and Melton prepared a directory through the collaboration of the Islamic Resource Institute in Tustin, California (36). In the last three years, since the above list was prepared, the number of mosques and centers has grown enormously in the USA. In addition to this, in most cities and campus towns private religious gatherings are held in private apartments and houses promoting Islamic activities. This sort of gathering is usually held on a rotation basis, from one place to another and among a small group of Muslims once every month. Most of these meetings are discussions on various aspects on life in Islam and include efforts on how to project a more friendly image of both Muslims and Islam to the larger public in the USA (38).

Table 8.2 : Mosques and Islamic Centers per US State in 1982

State	No. of Mosque	State	No. of Mosque
California	153	Kentucky	12
New York	150	South Carolina	12
Illinois	83	Wisconsin	11
Texas	58	New Mexico	11
Pennsylvania	46	Arizona	10
Ohio	46	Oregon	9
Michigan	42	Mississippi	9
New Jersey	42	Minnesota	8
Virginia	37	Kansas	8
Florida	32	Idaho	7
Indiana	28	Arkansas	5
Washington, DC	28	Nebraska	5

Following Table 8.2 : Mosques and Islamic Centers per US State in 1982

Maryland	26	Utah	5
Louisiana	23	West Virginia	5
Missouri	20	Montana	4
Nth Carolina	18	Delaware	3
Georgia	17	Nevada	3
Alabama	17	Rhode Island	3
Oklahoma	16	South Dakota	2
Tennessee	15	Alaska	1
Colorado	15	Hawaii	1
Massachusetts	13	New Hampshire	1
Washington	13	Wyoming	1
Iowa	13	Maine	0
Connecticut	13	Vermont	0
		Total	1060

Koszegi and Melton catalog 1227 mosques and Muslim centers in the US in 1992, i.e., 117 units more than the ISNA Directory in the same year. This is a compact list which includes centers and mosques attended both by both the immigrant and African-American Muslims. The only shortcoming in this list is that it does not include Islamic centers and mosques which were not officially registered by the regional Muslim community headquarters. The top five states with the largest number of mosques and Islamic centers are California, New York, Illinois, Michigan and Texas, whereas the ISNA list gives such five states as California, New York, Illinois, Texas and Pennsylvania, in this order.

Today, we find the growth of a vast spectrum of organizations, pursuing a wide variety of agenda and providing multifarious services to the community. We can analyze the purpose and function of these organizations and group them. We also find many other national organizations that came into existence either as an expression of

dissatisfaction against the American system or because of specific visions of Islamic work.

Often, Islamic organizations run Islamic centers. Islamic centers are established in most American cities, located in most American cities. Larger cities and regions have several of them. Chicago had over 50 Islamic centers and Boston has over 21 Islamic centers. Both New York City and Los Angeles have many Islamic centers to serve the needs of their growing Muslim populations.

The services of Islamic centers have also improved considerably both in the quality and quantity of their work. Some Islamic centers, such as the Muslim Community Center (Chicago), have a core of more than 250 workers who serve the Muslim community through 30 committees. The Islamic Society of Houston operates through 27 committees. The Islamic Foundation of Villa Park (Illinois), the Islamic Society of Orange County (California) and the Islamic Center of Southern California in Los Angeles have many workers, programs and services.

Islamic centers play a triple role in the lives of the Muslim community in the USA; religious, social and educational. Quite obviously, they are meeting places for the daily five-time prayers, for Friday prayers, for taraweeh prayers during Ramadan, for arranging Eid prayers and also serve as places for funeral prayers. Secondly, Islamic centers hold social functions such as marriages, monthly and annual group dinners and social meetings for the Muslim community. Thirdly, for the purpose of Islamic education most Islamic centers serve as week-end or Sunday schools for children and youths. In some urban Islamic centers there are provisions for adult education in which, besides religious education, the teaching of modern Arabic language and of English as a secondary language is offered. Some Islamic centers in campus towns also provide pre-school education to Muslim children. Nevertheless, although Islamic centers serve as a

hub for Muslim activities, still only 10% of the entire Muslim population are covered by them. More are therefore needed.

Islamic centers are in fact integral parts of the mosques in the USA, and the administrators of the mosques oversee the functions of the centers also. Larry Poston rightly explains that (39) :

"The American masjid is a multiplex, combining prayer room, educational center, political forum, social hall, informal law court, and counseling clinic, all under one roof. The imam assumes the role of educator, administrator, accountant, fund-raiser, political agitator, informed lawyer and counselor".

The only mistake that Poston makes in his assessment is that on the American scene, at least 90% of the mosques and Islamic centers do not have an "Imam" in the traditional sense of the term. These "imams" are undoubtedly practicing Muslims but not necessarily trained theologians as found in Muslim countries. Moreover, 90% of these mosques do not have fixed "imams" come from as many different disciplines as the Muslims choose to study at the university.

9 - National Muslim Organizations in the USA

The settlement and growth of various communities among immigrants from the Old World and the African-American revert has given rise to ethnic organizations which cater to the cultural, social, national, ethnic and religious needs of those communities. Several national groups, such as the Biharis, Hyderabidis, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Palestinians, Somalis and Kuwaitis, have more than one regional organization serving them. Some ethnic groups that established significant organizations are :

American Federation of Muslims from India ;

World Shi'a Muslim Organization ;

Anti-Arab Defamation League ;

Association of Arab, University Graduates ;
 International Association of Sufism ;
 Turkish Crescent Association ;
 ROOTS (Palestinian Youth) ;
 Indus Society, Pakistan ;
 Consultative Committee of Indian Muslims ;
 New England Muslim Sisters Association ;
 The National Community ;
 Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA) ;
 Balkan Muslim Association ;
 Pakistani League of America ;
 Pakistan American Association ;
 Aligarh Muslim University Alumni Association ;
 Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt ;
 Malaysian Islamic Study Group (MISG) ;
 Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia ;
 Muslim Student Association Persian Speaking Group ; and
 North American Bangladeshi Islamic Community (NABIC).

The ethnic organizations are playing an important role in preserving ethnic consciousness, local culture and linguistic heritage, though their major purpose is to promote Islam. Most of these organizations have their own newsletters to inform the general public of their individual activities and programs.

During the last decade African-Americans have not only participated in Muslim affairs, they have played a leading role in Islamic organizations. Within their own community, their role has been extremely important in making da'wah, establishing Masajid, Islamic schools, social service centers and fighting against drugs.

The need for a platform, both to protect and promote Muslim interests in a non-Muslim environment, became imperative in 1950's.

On June 28, 1952, the First national Muslim conference was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, ending with the formation of the International Muslim Society (IMS). From the beginning, IMS presented an opportunity to bring the fragmented Muslim voices together. However, it took a couple more years before the vision with which the IMS was created to begin to bear any tangible results.

In July 1954, in its third conference in Chicago, IMS was developed into the Federation of Islamic Association (FIA). Its purpose was to provide a mother organization under which a centralized administration could be established. In less than a decade, the FIA became a very popular organization among the Muslims of North America, including Canada. It hosted its annual meetings, all across the USA.

As the Muslim communities grew and became more involved in Islamic activities, barely a decade later, in 1963 the Muslim Student Association (MSA) was formed. A new phase for the Muslims began in the USA. While the FIA served the needs of the Muslims in the 1950's, MSA, in a much expanded form, started serving the needs of a larger community since the 1960's. All major cities and college campuses established their own MSA chapters, and close coordination as immediately established between regional and national MSA chapters.

The MSA in each campus town became a meeting ground for all Muslim activities in the campus ; The MSA executives became the caretakers of both the Muslim students and the Muslim residents in the community. The MSA's primary task is not only to serve those who come to the mosque and the Islamic center, but also to invite non-practicing Muslims to participate in Muslim festivals and special occasions. It is at the MSA level that Muslim families interact very closely with one another.

MSA eventually became the official voice of the Muslims in every university campus in the USA. Although Muslim students have their

own ethnic student organizations in every campus such as Turkish Students' Association, Arab Students' League, Pakistan Students' Association, Malaysian Students' Association, General Union of Palestine Students, Iranian Students' Association, etc..., however, when it comes to Muslim interests at the university or state levels, it is the MSA which is expected to take the lead. Moreover, all other Muslim students' associations work somewhat under the umbrella of the MSA, because it is the MSA alone which serves as the central organization for Muslim students. The MSA is indeed the melting point for all Muslim students coming from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The importance of the MSA can hardly be over-exaggerated in the lives of Muslim students residing in the USA.

The 1960's was a decade of great upheavals and turmoils in the USA. From the western seaboard of the USA to the rims of the East Indies angry protesters, many of them youths, were taking to the streets. The war in Vietnam was threatening social peace in the USA. At this historical moment, in 1968, a group of North American Muslims launched an Islamic Movement to introduce an Islamic way of life in a torn and polarized continent. Three years later, in 1971, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) was born.

In the last quarter of this century, since its inception, apart from introducing Islam, ICNA has branched out in many directions. It launched a multimedia project, Sound Vision, which produces videos, computers and audios for propagating the message of Islam. In the area of print-media ICNA publishes a monthly magazine called the Message. In the world of finance, ICNA has established MSI Finance Corporation which offers interest free financing. ICNA Book Services distribute Islamic literature in the USA and Canada, and the ICNA Relief extends its hand in times of calamities to Muslim victims everywhere across the world. ICNA headquarters are located in Jamaica, New York.

ICNA's 20th Annual Convention was held at Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania, during the first week of July in 1995. The convention drew over three thousand members from the USA and Canada. ICNA, like other national organizations, has three levels of organizational structure ; central, regional and local units. The whole of North America is divided into organizational regions. The regions act as a bridge between the center and the local units. Each region has its own core of administration and is administered by a regional President, the responsibility of whom is to train and expand the local units at the grassroots level.

The North American-Islamic Trust (NAIT) was established in 1971 to promote and protect the Islamic centers, mosques, student housing and Islamic schools in North America. According to NAIT's Annual Report 1992, "15 Islamic centers placed their properties with NAIT, raising the total number of properties to 185, an 8 percent increase over 1991. This marks a considerable 280 percent growth when compared to the early 1980's" (40). One of the Islamic centers is in Ottawa, Canada, and the rest are in the USA across 38 states, including one in Hawaii. The total assets of NAIT reported in the report, as of December 1992, was \$ 64,896,064 (40).

The half a dozen branches operating under the wings of NAIT, as support services for the communities, are :

- The Islamic Centers Division ;
- The Islamic Centers Cooperative Fund (established in 1979) ;
- The Legal Services Section ;
- The American Trust Publication (1976) ; and
- The Islamic Book Service and Audio Visual Center (1981).

NAIT by the very nature of its organizational structure became the MSA financial pipeline, handling both its investments and promoting Muslim businesses by providing small loans on a long and short-term basis. Modeled like NAIT, small financial groups, sometimes independent and sometimes established locally, have come up in

recent years. Financial consciousness has grown enormously among the Muslims of the USA in the 1990's.

Though the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was officially established in 1981, its original roots go back to the early 1950's. ISNA, as it stands today in Plainfield, Indiana, is the final culmination of a project whose foundation stone was laid in 1952 with the established of FIA.

ISNA emerged because of the historical necessity to accommodate the rapidly expanding Muslim communities in North America. It was indispensable to bring Muslim students in campus towns and join them to the Muslim communities outside academia. Thus, ISNA was an umbrella under which both the MSA members and the members of the Muslim Community Association (MCA) will interact, as one body. Over the last decade, the main component of ISNA came to include along with the MSA and MCA, the Canadian Islamic Trust (CIT), the Islamic Teaching center (ITC), the Foundation of International Development (FID), the American Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), the American Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), the Islamic Medical Association (IMA) and the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT).

ISNA also serves as a natural hub for many other national organizations. Its various activities can be seen in some of its notable publications which include Islamic Horizons, American Journal of Islamic Studies Scientist, Al-Ittihad, and the Journal of IMA. ISNA's 31th Annual Convention was held in Chicago in September 1994 and had a participation of about ten thousand people from all over North America.

In order to broaden the space for Muslims and Islam in the USA, ISNA is participating in many inter-faith activities as well as on the local political platforms. Presently, along with other Muslim organizations, ISNA is planning to create a political forum for the Muslims in the USA. Its target is to register at least one million

Muslim voters before the next US Presidential elections in 1996. This will establish an important place for Muslims in mainstream American life. In a world governed on the basis on how much political clout a community has, the construction of a political force will be a "giant leap" for the marginalized Muslim community in the USA.

However, during the last decade ISNA was caught up in era of obvious decline. Its income dropped and the annual losses were alarming. The organization became alienated from local communities and, for lack of central initiatives, ISNA was losing its credence among the Muslim communities in North America. Therefore, with the new leadership at the ISNA headquarters, an urgent need was felt to rejuvenate the organization. About 100 lenders from all over the USA were invited to the ISNA headquarters at Plainfield, Indiana, for a two-day conference in the first week of June, 1995. Most of the elite group was associated with ISNA activities since the last three decades. The purpose of the Conference was to evaluate the failures and the achievements of Islamic work in North America and where it should be leading to in the next century. Committees were formed and resolutions were made for swift actions in the forthcoming months.

The establishments of the MSA and ISNA, were indeed a major step in the history of Islam in North America. Simultaneously, a parallel development of local Islamic Centers and weekend schools in US cities spurred new dimensions for community growth. The Islamic Centers became pivots to social and religious activities for the local Muslim community. A brief sketch showing the socio-political needs and the larger role the major Muslim organizations have played on the lives of the Muslims will help us understand the rapid evolution of the Muslim communities of the USA since the 1950's to the present. Other notable national Muslim organizations are ;

Islamic Teaching Center (ITC) ;

International Islamic Federation of Students Organization (IIFSO) ;

International Muslim Students Union (IMSU) ;
 Muslim Youth Council (MYC) ;
 Muslim Community Association (MCA) ;
 Foundation of International Development (FID) ;
 National Islamic Youth Alliance (NIYA) ;
 Muslim Youth of North America (MYNA) ;
 Young Muslims for Faith and Action (YMFA) ;
 American Congress of Muslim Youth (ACMY) ;
 American Muslim Mission (AMM) ;
 World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) ;
 International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) ;
 World Federation of Islamic Missions (WFIM) ; and
 Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA)
 Muslim women's organizations listed in 1994 are (41) ;
 Young Women's Muslim Association (YWMA) ;
 American Muslim Women of Nevada ;
 Arab Women's Council of Muslim Women ;
 English Speaking Sisters Islamic Awareness ;
 Front Range Muslim Women's Coordinating Council ;
 International Organization of Muslim Women ;
 International Union of Muslim Women ;
 Islamic International Women's League ;
 Islamic Sisters Internationale ;
 Islamic Women's Council ;
 League of Muslim Women ;
 Malaysian Sisters ;
 Midwest Muslim Women's Association ;
 Mother W.I.T.;
 Mothers Sence ;

Muslim American Women ;
 Muslim Ladies Cultural Society ;
 Muslim Sisters Outreach ;
 Muslim Women's League ;
 Muslim Women's Association ;
 Muslim Women's Network ;
 Muslim Women's Society ;
 Al-Muslimah Publishing Co.;
 New England Muslim Sisters Association ;
 Al-Nisaa health and Wellness Center ;
 North American Council of Muslim Women ;
 Seattle Islamic Sisterhood ;
 Union of Palestinian Women ;
 United Muslim Women's Association ; and
 South Asian Women's Organization.

Besides these, there is a great number of specialized groups working under professional tags, such as, to name only a few ;

The Islamic Medical Association (IMA) ;
 The American Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE) ;
 The American Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) ; and
 The North American Association of Muslim Professionals and Scholars (NAAMPS).

10 - Islamic Movements and Sufism In The USA

One major goal which all the above Islamic organizations have in common is to create a moral and cultural consciousness among the US Muslims. In order to reach this objective, various Islamic movements rose at one time or another for the upliftment of the Muslim community. The most important ones are :

The Moorish American Science Temple under Noble Drew Ali ;
 The Moorish Federation Movement, under Fedrick Bey ;
 Al-Rukns Masjid Al-Malik Movement ;
 Moorish Orthodox Mosque Movement ;
 The Nation of Islam, under Elijah Muhammad ;
 Ansaar-Allah, under As-Sayyid Mahdi ;
 Hizbullah Movement ;
 Islamic Mission Society, under Sheikh Daoud ;
 The Five Percenter ;
 The Muslim Mosque Incorporated, founded by Malik Al-Shabazz/Malcolm X ;
 Dar ul-Islam, under Shaikh Al-Hajj Abdul Karim ;
 Hanafi Mazhab ;
 The Jammat-e-Islam ;
 The Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt ;
 The Islamic Party of North America ; and
 The Tableeghi Jamaat.

Each of these movements had a fixed and limited audience. Therefore its political power was not felt outside its immediate sphere. Nonetheless, these movements helped create a unique kind of self consciousness in Muslim community and strengthened the Muslim identity. Consequently, since the 1980's, the Muslim community have witnessed a tremendous increase in religious observance throughout the USA.

In the liberating discursivity of the above movements, the all-embracing theosophy of the Sufis cut across all ethnic lines, and alone among the Islamic movements in the USA secured a solid mooring in American spiritual life. Therefore, it is essential to examine the role of the Sufis in shaping the American experience of the Muslims and the

impact of Sufism in the USA. The major Sufi groups in the USA are (42) ;

- The Naqshabandiyya Tariqat, led by Shaykh Nazim Qibrisi ;
- The Naqshabandiyya Tariqat (Qwaisya) at Chesapeake Bay ;
- The Oveyssi Tariqat (California) ;
- The Bektashi Tariqat, under Baba Rexheb Bekri (Detroit, Michigan) ;
- The New Age Movement ;
- Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship ;
- The Beshara School ;
- The Chisti Order of America ;
- The Habibiyya-Shadhiliyya Sufi Order (San Francisco) ;
- The Shadhiliyya-Jafari (Texas) ;
- The Jerrahi Order in America (New York) ;
- The Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi ;
- The Meviana School ;
- The Mevlevi Order of America (Virginia) ;
- The Sufi Foundation of America (under Ardan Sarhan, in New Mexico) ;
- The Sufi Islamia Ruhaniat of America Society ;
- The Suti Order in the West (Chisti School founded by Pir Hazrat Inayat Khan in 1910, re-established by Pir Vilayat Khan in the 1970's) ;
- The Zahra Trust (Their publishing center is in Texas) ;
- The Rifa'i Ma'ruf (led by Serif Baba Catatyia in Chapel Hill, North Carolina) ;
- The Murabitun of North America (Charleston, South Carolina) ;
- The Alawi Tariqa at Jamaica, New York (under Yusuf Abdul-Wadud) ; and The Tijaniyya Tariqa (Washington, DC).

The Sufi Masters, those Who brought the "enlightened traditions of Islamic mysticism" popularly known as "Sufism", were late in their arrivals to the USA, at the turn of the century. However, in less than fifty years almost all Sufi orders established their spiritual space on the physical landscape of the USA. Apart from the major orders, such as the Qadiri, Chisti and the Naqshabandi Tariqas, other orders, such as the Mevlevi, Shadhiliyyah, Shadhiliyyah-Darqawi, Shadhiliyyah-Alawi, Ni'matullahi, Rifa'i, Qadiri-Rifa'i, Khalwati-Jerrahi, Oveyssi, Subud (Indonesian), and the Bektashi carved out their own sacred territory.

The "all-inclusive" philosophy of Sufism is working wonders in the USA. Furthermore, the preaching of the Sufi Masters that all Sufi paths lead only to one destination, where at the end both the guide and the path taken becomes absolutely irrelevant, caters well to the American desire for infinite choices.

A large number of Sufi khaneqahs or tekkes (centers) have sprung up all across the USA, from the West Coast to New England, in the last two decades. Since the Sufis are usually publicity shy, these spiritual centers avoid the limelight. Only through word of mouth literally hundreds of disciples participate in weekly and monthly dhikr (prayer and meditation) and sema (mystical music and dance) throughout the USA. Interestingly, in both the dhikrs and the semas a good number of mainstream White American converts of the first generation are taking part.

Apart from the dhikrs and semas, the USA of the 1990's is witnessing an unprecedented interest in Sufi literature. In this regard, translations of the works of great Sufi Orders and great Sufi poets, such as Ibn al-Arabi, Fakhruddin Iraqi, Hakim Sanai, Hafiz Shirazi, Fariduddin Attar, Abdurrahman Jami, Yunus Emre and above all Jalaladdin Rumi, are being translated into English. Bookstores carrying Sufi literature can be found in most major cities, even American bookstore chains have sections reserved for Sufi books and

spiritual literature. Moreover, Grand Shaykhs, or their appointed representatives in the USA, are publishing books in English explaining their Sufi order to the American audience. As an example is the excellent book of Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, the leader of the Naqshabandi Order of Sufis in North America, titled "The Naqshabandi Sufi Way; History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain", published in 1994, explaining the Naqshabandi Order since the advent of Islam.

11 - Islamic Editorial and Research Services In The USA

The Muslims of the USA are handicapped by having only a limited number of scholarly writers about Islam and many of them do not read. Consequently, they poorly defend themselves against false media charges. While Muslims are victims of oppression in all parts of the world, western media from imagined fears of Islam (43) have painted Muslims as a threat to world peace. A tragic example of the stereotypical image of the Muslims in the USA could be seen from the immediate wake of the tragic bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. One other small instance of Muslim bashing can be seen in the 1976 edition of the Merriam-Webster Thesaurus which listed the words hobo, tramp, vagabond, drifter, floater, vagrant, etc..., as an appropriate synonym for the word "Arab". Not to mention the belittling of Muslims in the film industry of Hollywood, even in the Disney version of Aladdin, the title song portrayed "Arabs", who were identified as Muslims, to be cruel and ruthless people. It is only after strong protests by Muslims that the line was deleted from the song.

Having blamed the American media for the dark image of the Muslims, it needs to be pointed out that the core of the problem lies within the Muslim community itself. There is a tendency of making Muslim leadership and Islamic knowledge the monopoly of an elite

group. Many such leaders are not aware of the actual grievances of Muslims in the mainstream. Obviously, Muslims are badly represented. Moreover, the Muslim press in the USA, is so weak and so ineffective that it is not heard in the mainstream American life.

The Muslim newsletters or magazines are not enough to counter the attacks on Muslims by the mainstream non-Muslim press. The major presses run by Muslims, as listed in the 1994 Resource Directory of Islam in America, are ;

- Islamic Perspectives (Saleem Abdul-Majeed) ;
- American Journal of Islamic Finance (Steven Abdulkader) ;
- Minaret (Aslam Abdullah) ;
- Nida ul-Islam (Rafique Ahwad) ;
- Trends (Ali-Ahtsham) ;
- Encounter with Islam (Suhail Banister)
- Khalifah (Adam Bholat) ;
- Al-Amal (Najib Ghoush) ;
- The Muslim Worker (M. Nasar Hack) ;
- Pakistan Journal (Akmal Hashmi) ;
- Islamic Affairs (Yasin Al-Jibouri) ;
- Voice of Islam (Mustafa Kashief) ;
- Islamic Thought (Irfan Ahmad Khan) ;
- The Message (Muhammad Fayyaz Khan) ;
- The American Muslim (Sheila Musaji) ;
- The Muslim Journal (Ayesha Mustafa) ;
- Washington Report on Middle East Affairs (Greg Noakes) ;
- American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (Sulayman Nyang) ;
- Arabia (Fathi Osman) ;
- Iqra (Hassan Zillur-Rahim) ;
- The Muslim Journal (Imam Alaudin Shabhzaz) ;

Islamic Horizons (Abubaker Al-Shigiey) ;
 New Trend (Kaukab Siddique) ;
 American Journal of Islamic, Social Sciences (Syed Muhammad Syeed) ;
 The Message (Saheer-Uddin) ;
 American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences (Jay Willoughby) ;

The above list does not include in-house regional magazines and newsletters of various organizations as they are not commercial ventures. The Muslim press in the USA does not have much impact and therefore is neither quoted nor criticized even by its rivals. Unless the Muslim press can produce "news", the voice of the Muslims in the USA will never be heard to a point that it can make a difference.

On the other hand, in-order for the Muslim "voice" to be heard, what the Muslim community needs most is positive coverage by the mainstream American press. The first step in this direction is to convince the media that "Islam" as a religion should not suffer for the present myths created against Muslims in the West. In this regard, the message of Islam should get its fair share in the media.

For the last few years, ICNA has launched a campaign for a positive coverage for both Islam and the Muslims in the American media, especially during the Islamic festivals of Ramadan and Eid. The campaign did bring in a limited result as the major US newspapers such as The New York Times, L.A. Times, Chicago Times, Chicago Sun Times, Daily News, Newsday, USA Today, among others, carried-stories announcing the religious festivals of the Muslims in the USA. In fact, in 1993, the New York Times carried seven stories presenting Islam and the lifestyles of Muslims in the greater New York area.

The major Islamic research services were established for primarily political and educational reasons. Islam became a subject of great curiosity in the Western world, for political reasons. This curiosity reached a peak after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and took a funny

twist during the Gulf War in 1990. Research institutions were founded to monitor the political climate in the fragmented fifty-two Muslim countries, major US universities opened up new department for the study of Islam and the behavioral pattern of Muslims, where both Muslims and non-Muslims are contributing in constructing a picture of Islam easily understood by the Western mind.

On the other hand, concerned Muslim professionals and academicians felt the need of establishing departments of Islamic studies and full-time Islamic schools including Sunday Islamic schools to impart Islamic education to their children. The immense need to establish Islamic institutions paved the way to installing Islamic research foundations by Muslim philanthropists.

Table 11.1 : Number of Islamic Schools per American Region

Region	Number of Schools
Central Atlantic	21
Eastern North Central	17
South Atlantic	13
Pacific	12
Western-South Central	10
Eastern South Central	6
Western North Central	4
New England	3
Mountains	1
Total	87

Thus, two sets of Islamic research foundations were simultaneously built, one within and the other outside the Muslim community. The first ones brought educators from various disciplines to develop the curriculum for the Islamic education of Muslim children. Plans were chalked out to produce books in every major area of education by which Muslim children in the US can learn to adapt to Islam in the US cultural context. The 1994 Resource Directory lists

111 full-time Islamic schools across thirty states. It also mentions the Islamic Foundation School in Chicago which provides a complete program of Islamic education.

Table 11.2 : Number of Islamic Schools per American State

State	Number of Schools
New York	10
California	10
Texas	8
Michigan	8
New Jersey	6
Pennsylvania	5
Illinois	5
Florida	3
Georgia	3
Massachusetts	3
Maryland	3
Missouri	3
Tennessee	3
Alabama	2
Indiana	2
North Carolina	2
Arizona	1
D.C.	1
Kentucky	1
Louisiana	1
Minnesota	1
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	1
Oregon	1
Virginia	1
Washington	1
Wisconsin	1
Total	87

The ISNA Directory of 1992 lists 87 full-time Islamic schools in 27 states. Table 11.1 gives the number of Islamic schools per American region and Table 11.2 gives the number of such schools per American state. More than 40% of all full-time Islamic schools are located in four-states ; New York, California, Texas and Michigan.

Thus, keeping one eye on the American system of public education and the other on the actual need of Islamic instruction, many Islamic research foundations also began to produce and publish Islamic literature. The books produced catered initially for the needs of children and youth, but later they branched out to adult needs as well, for both instruction and entertainment. Along with Islamic education, most of these foundations began to provide items of domestic use such as dresses, caps, scarves for hijab, etc., Muslim publishers with international connections began to publish and distribute Islamic books and educational materials. Thus, quality Islamic literature started to be produced in the American language. The major research institutes and foundations on Islam in the US with a good reputation overseas are :

- American Muslim Center of Learning and Activism ;
- Center for American Muslim Research ;
- Center for Arab Islamic Studies ;
- Center for Research and Communication ;
- Center for Research on Islamic World ;
- Faruqi Memorial Archive ;
- Foundation of Strategic Studies ;
- Institute for Palestine Studies ;
- International Institute of Islamic Thought ;
- Iqra' International Educational Foundation ;
- Islamic Research Foundation ;
- Minaret of Freedom Institute ;
- Palestine Research Center ;

Reading Research Council ;
 Royal Academy for Islamic Civilization Research ;
 Strategic Research Foundation ; and United Association for Studies and Research.

In addition to these, the Chicago-based American Islamic College is in its eleventh academic year. The College brochure announces that it offers two Bachelor of Arts degrees, one in Arabic Studies and the other in Islamic Studies. The latter may have a minor or concentration in any area of social sciences or humanities. The Bachelor's Degree may also lead to higher studies in law, medicine, or other branches of social sciences and liberal arts. Apart from American Muslim and non-Muslim students, students with interest in the study of Islam come from several Muslim countries in Africa and Asia.

Furthermore, focus on Islamic and Middle Eastern studies is becoming a part of the curriculum in many campuses. There are about 140 universities and colleges in the USA that offer programs on the study of Islam, the Middle East and Near Eastern literature. Departments of foreign languages also offer the teaching of Arabic as a second language.

12 - Conclusions

The Muslims of the USA, scholars and non-scholars, skilled and non-skilled, seem to be in a better position than their brothers and sisters in the rest of the Ummah.

In a highly individualistic society, the Muslims of the USA are free from any type of inquisition. They have no fear of open discrimination or domination over them by any individual or any group of people. They receive fair and equal treatment under the US constitutional law. Their children receive quality basic education free of cost and have the privilege to receive equal health benefits, when and where it is

possible. Above all, in a democratic system the Muslims can enjoy, along with mainstream Americans, freedom of speech, freedom of movement and freedom of religion. Their basic civil rights are not trampled upon with the change of governments. Having pointed out all these, one needs to know that along with all the benefits that the US provides, the Muslims of America are also exposed to all the dangers inherent in a highly industrialized nation, as the U.S.

Drugs, crimes, alcohol, and all the evils that materialism generates can ruin the life of an individual. Thus, in a society where more than half the children live with a single parent, where the rate of divorce is alarmingly high and where the family as a unit has terribly deteriorated, Muslims are constantly threatened to lose all that they cherish so much, such as their faith and their family. Here, Islam comes in as guide and as a moral force to protect both the family values and morality. Islam alone with its moral code protects the identity of a Muslim individual.

Islamic education of how to achieve the "profile of perfection" in the USA should be blended with advanced American education. It is education that will open up the windows of understanding and will help an individual Muslim survive in a materialistic society with honesty and integrity. It is education, both secular and religious, which will build bridges and heal the wounds of misunderstanding. Thus, Muslims in North America should participate in building Islamic schools and Islamic research foundations so that their children can be introduced to the Islamic law which teaches rights and responsibilities, peaceful co-existence, love of family, friends and neighbors, while they are benefiting from the worldly wisdom of American schools

In this regard, Muslim educationists must reach a common middle-ground. They need to abandon the extremes of advising American-Muslim parents to send their children to either secular public schools or to Islamic religious schools only. Muslim children must attend

both, in order to be trained for the real world beyond education. It will be a mistake to create Islamic institutions as an alternate to the public educational system and segregate the Muslim students. While at the same time it will be self-defeating to send children to public schools without the moral foundations provided by Islam. In an ideal situation, Muslim educationists should help create institutions and Islamic texts that would attract non-Muslim students who are interested in Islam.

The "American Experience" by its very nature is individual-friendly. In this hyphenated society, American-Muslims can retain their own heritage and at the same time be an essential part of the American system. The danger is that lack of understanding, many a times, forces an individual to see "Islam" as irreconcilable, which of course is a flawed judgement. Islam is a universal religion and Muslims are the "citizens of the world". Unless this attitude is implemented in the daily lives of the Muslim they will remain marginalized in a nation that they can so easily inherit.

American Muslims need to explore and define more precisely what it means to be American-Muslims, for in spite of the widespread use of the term, shared understandings with mainstream Americans do not exist yet.

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CHAPTER IV

Islam Among African Americans

by

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1. Introduction
2. The Tragedy of the first African Muslims in America
3. The first Islamic Organizations at the United States
4. The First Emancipation Movements Among Africano - Americans
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1 - Introduction

The realization that Muslims have become a significant, and permanent part of the American mosaic, has been slow to come. However, of late, a number of works have been published, notably those written or edited by Yvonne Haddad (1, 2, 3), highlighting the Islamic presence in America. Despite these useful works, few people are aware that to-day there are more than 200,000 Muslim businesses, 1,200 mosques, 165 Islamic schools, 425 Muslim associations, and 85 Islamic publications in USA. Nor are many people aware that Muslims, who number around 5 million, if not 6 million, are poised to outnumber Jews and become the second largest religious group in USA (4).

Africano - American Muslims constitute a very large segment of the Muslim population of USA; according to some estimates, as much as 42% (5). Also, Africano - American Muslims have been the first Muslims to have settled in the New World, and have been present there for close to five centuries. This long period of their history, their prolonged struggle to maintain their faith in extremely difficult circumstances, are subjects that have just begun to be explored.

We have attempted in this paper to study essentially the contemporary revival of Islam among Africano - Americans. This necessitated casting a cursory look at the history of Africano - American Muslims in the New World, especially USA, to provide the necessary background for this study. We have also surveyed the rise of the diverse movements that arose in the name of Islam, both sectarian and orthodox, in the course of the present century and have attempted to see how orthodox Islam has been able to consolidate itself among Africano - Americans. This development seems undeniable, notwithstanding the persistence of fairly important heterodox groups, such as the Nation of Islam under Louis Farrakhan and the Five Per centers.

Africans began to arrive in the New World in the 15th Century, some of the earliest ones to arrive came with the explorers; and some possibly came even before Columbus. Originally, their number was small but gradually increased owing to the need of the American economy for slave labor. By the year 1863, when the Emancipation was proclaimed, their number had risen to 4.5 million. Since then their number has been steadily rising mainly through natural growth: 30.6 million out of the total US population of 249 million in 1990 ; 31.6 million out of 254.6 million in 1992 ; and 32.9 million out of 260 million in 1995 (6). Thus, their percentage in the total population, which has been on the rise, stands today at 12.6%. It is estimated that it will continue to rise in the coming decades, reaching the high figure of 16.2% in 2050 (7).

Although Africano - Americans have always been a minority in USA and its different states and regions, they have traditionally been concentrated in the rural South. However, since around the beginning of the present century, they have been moving northwards, a movement which perceptibly increased during the Great Depression and gained further momentum since World War II. As a result, while a majority of the African Americans still lives in the South, their presence in the urban North is also quite conspicuous. Among the Southern states, they constitute 35% of the total population of Mississippi, 30% of South Carolina, 29% of Louisiana, 27% of Georgia, 26% of Alabama, and 22% of North Carolina. In the North, they constitute 23% of the population of the State of Maryland.

A major demographic feature of the Africano - American population is its conspicuous presence in the major cities of USA. During the recent past, Africano - Americans have virtually been taking over the metropolitan cities while the Whites have been moving out to the suburban areas. They number around 2.1 million in New York ; 1.4 million in Chicago; over 800,000 in Detroit ; about 700,000 in Philadelphia; and 600,000 in Los Angeles (8).

However, the influence of Africano - Americans in the political life of their country is much less than warranted by their numbers. They are the most disenfranchised among the ethnic minorities of USA. The voter turn-out among them has been the lowest in the national, state and local elections. This is due, in part, to their low level of education, poverty, political alienation and apathy and, in the Southern states, to the remnants of Jim Crow laws. Although the legal barriers to the political participation of Africano - Americans have been removed, thanks mainly to the civil rights legislation of the 1960's and 1970's and to the proactive role of the Federal courts, social and economic barriers still inhibit their fuller participation in the political process.

However, in recent years, the political participation, representation and clout of Africano - Americans have increased for several reasons.

First, at the level of neighborhoods, school boards, counties and local governments, the representation of Africano - Americans has increased substantially in recent years, thanks to the Voting Rights Act and the proactive intervention of the federal courts. Second, the redistribution of several constituencies and voting districts in the Southern states has helped create Africano - American majority districts and has thus increased the number of Africano - American elected officials in the US Congress and state legislatures. Third, the minority alliance of Africano - Americans, Hispanics, the poor, and the underprivileged, what Jesse Jackson calls "the Rainbow coalition", has proven a successful strategy for Africano - American candidates in urban areas. Coalition politics in urban areas and centrist political ideology have also helped Africano - Americans to capture political offices; for the first time an Africano - American became the governor of Virginia, and for the first time an Africano - American woman became Senator from Illinois. Fourth, the flight of the Whites from the inner cities to the suburbs has led the central cities to become predominantly Africano - American and Hispanic. It is because of this phenomenon that in several large metropolitan areas (New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Detroit, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C.), Africano - American mayors have been elected. Fifth, Jesse Jackson's bids for Democratic Presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988 also helped mobilize a large number of Africano - American voters both in the urban North and in the rural South. This paved the way for a substantial increase in the number of elected Africano - American officials at the local, state and national levels.

Another significant development at the political level also deserves mention. Since the civil rights movement, and even earlier, Africano - Americans have by far and large voted for Democratic candidates in presidential and congressional elections. However, recently, as a result of frustration with Democratic liberalism, a section of the middle class Africano - American electorate, concerned about crimes, drugs, rising

taxes and the escalating costs of social spending, has turned to a more conservative, Republican alternative.

2 - The Tragedy of the First African Muslims in America

The estimated total number of Africano - American Muslims varies from 1.2 million to about 1.7 million out of the total American Muslim population of more than 4 million (9, 10). The estimates about the proportion of Africano - American Muslims to the total Muslim population of USA vary from 30% to 42% (11, 12). Even if the higher figure of 1.7 million Africano - American Muslims out of a total of 30.6 million Africano - Americans is considered, Africano - American Muslims constitute about 5% of the total Africano - American population of USA.

This percentage is strikingly lower than the percentage of Muslims in the total Africano - American population in USA during the earlier period of history. According to recent research, this percentage was presumably no less than 30% (13) and possibly as high as 50%. (14).

The history of Africano - Americans shows a continued presence of Muslims of African origin in the New World beginning with the visit of America by Columbus late in the 15th Century ; there is even evidence to suggest that it pre-dates that visit. Be that as it may, the mass influx of Africans, of whom a good proportion was Muslim, began early in the 17th Century. For it is then that the well-known Atlantic slave trade began and remained in full operation for around two centuries.

During the course of centuries about ten million Africans landed in the Western Hemisphere in chains. A great majority of them settled in Brazil and the Caribbean. However, about one out of every 20 slaves was brought to North America. This makes the number of Africans who came to USA close to half a million. A vast majority of them, i.e. about 90%, remained up until the first decade of the 20th Century in

the Southern states, especially in Georgia and South Carolina. For a variety of reasons, perhaps the most important of which was the policy of the slave-masters to ensure that the slave families did not remain integrated, the African slaves could not maintain any vital links with their past, or retain any strong sense of collective identity. Indeed, many Africano - Americans today consider themselves to have virtually no collective memory of their past and no knowledge of their roots.

African slaves came to America from a wide variety of regions in the African Continent and represent almost all ethnic stocks. It has not been possible so far to accurately estimate the proportion of Muslims in the early period of American history among them. However, in general, the earlier perceptions about the proportion of Muslims which had leaned on the conservative side have now been shown to be incorrect. Scholars specializing in the early history of Africano - Americans are presently inclined to the view that there was a very high percentage of Muslims among the Africans who came to the New World, including USA.

Clyde-Ahmad Winters, for instance, has shown that both in South and North America, the proportion of Muslims among the Africans brought to the Americas was quite high. He has contended that a majority of the earliest and latest slaves to arrive in the Americas came from those African regions where Muslims were in majority. According to Winters, the first mention of African Muslims in the New World began with the visit of Columbus. Estevanico, who served as a guide in the exploration of Arizona was a Negro Arab from Morocco. We also learn of several other Muslim slaves and adventurers who were used by the Spaniards to help them in exploration and as interpreters (15).

There is considerable evidence of uninterrupted Islamic presence in America from the earliest times after the visit of Columbus. It is known, for instance, that in 1518, the Spaniards were upset about the

Islamic activities of many slaves. This seems explainable in view of the fact that Granada had fallen only in 1492 so that it was natural for the Spaniards to fear the persecuted Muslims. It is this fear which also explains the effort of the Spaniards to prevent African-Indian marriages. The Spaniards also feared the rise of a Muslim empire in the New World under African imams, a fear which resulted in the removal of African and native Indian Muslim activities from America. It was again the same fear which made the Spaniards decide subsequently not to purchase any more slaves from North-West Africa, especially Berbers and Wolof. It is also noteworthy that the early revolts in South America were led mainly by Muslims, as were the series of uprisings in Brazil in the 19th Century (16).

The slave traders specialized in the sale and recruitment of children and teenage slaves, for more slaves could be bought for the same amount since they were smaller and their price was less. Some of these Muslim slaves had learnt the entire Qur'an by heart and also knew, by the time they reached their teens, how to pray. On an average, the Muslim slaves were better educated and generally more civilized than their non-Muslim counterparts, and there is much evidence to suggest that they tried hard to cling to Islamic beliefs and practices (17, 18).

Scholars have brought to light a fair number of African Muslim slaves who impressed the people around them for one reason or the other, but specially for their intelligence, higher education and piety. Occasional references to them exist in contemporary writings covering a very wide geographical area of America and different periods of American history. This, again, points to a continuity of Islamic presence in the New World.

Among these African slaves we learn about Ayub Sulaiman Ibrahim Diallo, who became known as Job Ben Solomon in Maryland. He went to England and wrote two Qur'ans from his memory while he was there. Likewise, in the late 18th Century lived "Prince" Abdul

Rahman Ibrahima in Mississippi, Lamine Kebe (better known as "Old Paul"), and Salih Bilali. The latter read and wrote Arabic. He was a deeply religious person who abstained from liquors and kept various fasts, especially of Ramadan. He was a Fulani, was born in 1770 and was held in bondage in Georgia. Similarly, Omar ibn Said, called Moro, was held as a slave in North Carolina. He studied Islam upto the age of 25, performed Hajj and took part in wars. Above all, a great deal is known now about Kunta Kinte who came from Juffure, Gambia, and landed in America in 1767. He was the ancestor of the famous Africano - American writer, Alex Haley (19), whose desire to learn about him led him to a fascinating voyage of discovery to the village of his ancestors (20, 21, 22, 23).

Even though the number of Africano - American Muslims in this early period was quite high, Islam could not strike roots in USA as an organized religion. In fact, over the years, the proportion of Muslims significantly decreased for a variety of reasons, including the fact that Muslim slaves were occasionally forced to renounce their Islamic beliefs on pain of death (13, 24). The result was that many of them sublimated their true religion, and many others gave it up altogether, some even accepted the religion of their masters, whereas some secretly clung to Islamic belief and practice, and some of whom occasionally played a leading role in revolts and insurrections (25).

Apart from the pressure of the slave-masters on the slaves to renounce Islam, a number of other factors also prevented organized Islam from striking roots. One of these was the large-scale transportation of African slaves. During the years 1790-1860, over two million slaves were moved from one part of America to another owing to inter-state slave trade. In most cases, the husband and the wife lived on different plantations. Additionally, each slave witnessed an average of 11.4 sales of his family of origin and of his own immediate family. In the South, when the mother was sold, the children were kept by the slave-master. Even otherwise, at about the

age of 8, the children were separated from the mother. The transmission of Islamic values was thus rendered extremely difficult owing to the destruction of the family and the traditional work schedule of the slaves, from "sun up to sun down" (26).

This early period of Africano - American history seems to be of crucial importance and presents us with intriguing questions. Adequate answers to these questions will illuminate an important aspect of Africano - American history covering more than 200 years and will reveal how and why Islam among a very high proportion of Africano - Americans was reduced, by the turn of the 20th Century, to insignificance. But apart from that, adequate answers to these questions will probably also contribute to explaining why, after Islam had been almost obliterated from Africano - Americans, they have recently begun to accept Islam en masse.

Kly has attempted to answer some of these questions posed by us in a perceptive paper (18). He has shown that the Africano - American Muslim slaves have passed through very hard times precisely because they were Muslims. "They were tortured, burnt alive, hang or shot unless they renounced their religion and their names and accepted to be called by the name of the one who claimed to own them" (27). Kly has also shown that despite terror, small pockets of Muslims and some isolated individual Muslims managed to survive in their faith through the period of enslavement (28).

The first Muslim slaves seem to have landed on the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia where their descendants still live today. In a great many writings of the 18th, 19th, and even the early 20th Century, we find useful information about the presence in this region of practicing Muslims who were descendants of these African Muslim slaves.

It is in the South Carolina and Georgia coastal region from which 95% of all Africano - Americans began their sojourn in USA that traces of an uninterrupted presence of Muslims are found. However,

African Muslims, especially those of the South Carolina-Georgia region were subjected to excessive persecution. The Muslims responded by constantly rising in revolt against slavery and oppression. Kly speaks of some such Muslims in these words :

"They often lived as marauders on small islands on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. When they were captured, they were either killed, or tortured, and forced to forsake their Islamic practices and accept the Christian teachings of that period (one of which was that they were created by God to be the slaves of the colonists). Eventually most of this community was exterminated or converted to a hybrid form of Christianity (Afro-Christianity) that was taught and developed by those Africans who had submitted to the practice of slavery with the hope of developing African-Christianity as a way of submitting to the practice of slavery while promoting christianization and anglo-americanization as the means to achieve freedom" (29).

The earliest Muslim community of African origin thus lived under quite inhospitable conditions. The destruction of the family deprived them of a major source for the transmission of Islamic belief and practice. Also, the prevalent conditions were not propitious for the establishment of institutions which might have sustained Islamic life (masjid, madrasah, etc...). Still, these African Muslims made a brave attempt to adhere to Islam and deserve to be remembered for their strong devotion to their faith. Whenever possible they prayed five times a day and selected imams from among themselves such as those known to the Anglo-Americans as "African Tom" and Bilali. These early Muslims in South Carolina and Georgia, as well as elsewhere, could not survive as Muslim communities. A very vast majority of their descendants became Christians but many cultural vestiges of these communities did survive. While Islamic belief and practice might have disappeared, or greatly weakened, a vague consciousness that they were originally Muslims seems to have lingered on. This

vague consciousness seems to be a major factor in the contemporary revival of Africano - Americans' interest in Islam.

In the words of Morroe Berger: "It is quite possible that some of the various American Muslim groups of the past half century or so had their roots in these vestiges, that the tradition was handed down in a weak chain from generation to generation" (30). There also seems much sense in the statement that a seminary student made to The Wall Street Journal : "I believe that the religion of Islam is part of the genetic memory of Africano - Americans" (31).

Therefore, it is understandable why the claim of Africano - American leaders from Noble Drew Ali to Fard Muhammad to Elijah Muhammad that Islam is the true original religion of the Africano - Americans struck a familiar chord in the hearts of a very large number of Africano - Americans.

3 - The First Islamic Organizations in the USA

During the second half of the 19th Century, the Islamic presence in USA seemed on the verge of extinction. Muslims in large numbers had eventually been assimilated and those who were left with any Islamic consciousness found no external means to sustain it.

It was precisely at this stage (the last decades of the 19th Century) when immigration brought Muslims from overseas, a development which replenished the Islamic presence in USA. Muslim immigrants came from Syria, Iraq, Egypt, India, Eastern Europe and Turkey and settled in different parts of USA, especially in and near the commercial centers in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan and California. The early immigrants were usually men with low education and low proficiency in English and remained occupied, in the main, with their economic pursuits. However, soon they also concerned themselves with building small prayer places or mosques for the preservation of their religion and

culture. The predominant impulse that one can notice in them was to maintain Islam and transmit it to their descendants. There hardly seems to have been any aspiration to convey the teachings of Islam to their non-Muslim neighbors.

However, with the passage of time better educated Muslims arrived in greater numbers and the interaction between the immigrant and indigenous Muslims, especially Africano-American Muslims, increased. Also gradually, some of the immigrant Muslims began to get active about Islam and even began to teach Islamic belief and practice. Thus, during the first decades of the present century, it is mainly some of these new immigrant Muslims who carried the message of Islam to the indigenous population, including the Africano-Americans. At times these were from some Arab countries, or from the Caribbean, or came from the South-Asian Subcontinent.

The story of Islam among Africano-Americans during the 20th Century is largely one of initiatives taken by the immigrants to spread their different versions of Islam, and the responses of the Africano-Americans to those initiatives. These initiatives occasionally led to the spread and reinvigoration of mainstream Islam. But often it also gave rise to a number of cults, movements, and institutions of a heterodox and heretical character. However, all this caused a large number of Africano-Americans to identify themselves with Islam, and this development ultimately led a great number of them to the Islamic mainstream.

The studies of Islam in America have been generally focused on heterodox groups, a fact which has relegated to the background the fact of the existence of a sizeable number of orthodox Muslims. Consequently, the efforts of these Muslims to maintain and promote orthodox Islamic belief and practice have not been much highlighted. The presence of such orthodox individuals and groups, both among the immigrants and Africano-Americans, has not been fully appreciated possibly because human beings have a propensity to feel

excited about things that are bizarre and exotic and out of the ordinary, whereas there is little excitement for things with which one is familiar.

Before we embark on a study of the different movements which arose among Africano-Americans in the name of Islam from the second decade of the present century, it seems necessary to point out that several significant orthodox Islamic groups arose late in the 19th and early in 20th Century.

One of such earlier groups arose in New York City. This should not be astonishing because there have been for long a fair number of Muslims of both African and non-African origins in New York City. This City, which presently has 300,000 to 600,000 Muslims (32), had known Islam since the era of the arrival of Europeans from the Africans brought to it. Probably Muslim seamen and other temporary Muslim migrants introduced the observance of Islam which left its mark on New York City.

One of the earliest orthodox Islamic groups known to us was formed by a White American convert to Islam. This man was called Alexander Russell Webb (d. 1916). Webb was an educated person and an able journalist who was interested, at the intellectual level, in oriental philosophy. He accepted Islam while he was American Consul General in the Philippines presumably as a result of his contacts with some Muslims in Bombay, India. Webb was a zealous da'i who established the American Moslem Brotherhood in 1893 in New York. He also founded the Moslem World Publishing Company which published the journals "Voice of Islam" and the "Moslem World" between 1893 and 1895. By the end of the 19th Century, the Brotherhood had virtually disintegrated as a result of inner dissensions.

In 1907, Polish, Russian and Lithuanian Muslim immigrants to Brooklyn, New York, founded another group presumably of the same kind, the American Mohammadan Society, the first society around a

mosque. It remained the main Islamic outpost in New York for more than one generation, claiming an average of 400 members through the 1950's.

It is again in New York that still another, and a powerful, orthodox Islamic group was established in the 1920's by the Moroccan born Sheikh Daoud Ahmad Faisal who came to USA via Grenada. He organized the second bona fide mosque, the Islamic Mission of America. In 1939, he rented a building in Brooklyn Heights which he was able to buy in 1947. Apart from holding congregational prayers, this organization was interested in spreading the teachings of Islam in America. Conversion, the improvement of the image of Islam, and the dissemination of the message of a just and compassionate God remained central to Faisal's goals for the Islamic Mission.

Faisal also established an Islamic school called the Institute of Islam. The school's main period of activity was between 1950 and 1965 when it offered daily, two hour long, year round Islamic and Arabic classes for children and adults. From the late 1950's through the mid 1960's, the Islamic Mission was one of the City's only immigrant mosque and Faisal administered to a 300 member congregation, which included diplomats, businessmen and university students. There was also a Muslim Ladies Cultural Society.

The Islamic Mission brought Africano - American and immigrant Muslims together. It served as a forum where Africano - Americans received exposure to mainstream Islam. Faisal tried to promote harmony and interaction within New York's Islamic community. However, for a variety of reasons, there occurred serious splits in the Islamic Mission, and a significantly large chunk of Africano - American Muslims separated from it and established a movement of their own.

The relatively large number of Muslims in New York City, with a large proportion of immigrant Muslims and their relatively higher intellectual level, enabled mainstream Islam to strike roots there. In

smaller cities where Muslims were small in numbers, or in places which were somewhat remote from metropolitan cities which had a significant proportion of educated immigrant Muslims, the story of Islam was different.

It would be pertinent to note that alongside the above mentioned orthodox groups, a heretical movement also established itself in USA in the early years of the 20th Century. A small number of immigrants from the South Asian subcontinent started the Ahmadiyyah movement in USA. The latter believe that the founder of their sect, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908) was a prophet. Since this was fundamentally opposed to the finality of the prophet hood of Muhammad (peace be on him), the Ahmadiyyah faced opposition from the outset, especially from immigrant Muslims. However, the members of the group always insisted that they were the exponents of true Islam, and that their version of Islam alone was authentic. The leader of this group, Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, started a magazine, "The Muslim Sunrise", to spread the teachings of the sect.

The Ahmadiyyah have had a significant impact during the first half of the 20th Century on the Africano - Americans. Given the fact that authentic knowledge about Islam was scarcely available in this period, and given the relatively low level of education among Africano - Americans, the Ahmadiyyah were able to win a good number of converts among them (33, 34).

Among other things, this was due to the proselytizing zeal for which the Ahmadiyyah have been known. However, a majority of these converts gradually became aware of the falsity of the Ahmadiyyah doctrines. As the number of immigrant Muslims increased, many Africano - Americans who had converted to the Ahmadiyyah gradually became better aware of the authentic teachings of Islam which prompted many of them to renounce the Ahmadiyyah. This development does not detract from the fact that for quite some time in the first half of the 20th Century the Ahmadiyyah fired the

imagination of quite a number of Africano - Americans, and for some queer reason, especially of jazz musicians (35). It is also quite possible that they had influenced, even if indirectly, the rise of heterodox, sectarian cults such as the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam, a subject which remains to be carefully studied.

4- The First Emancipation Movements Among Africano - Americans

In order to appreciate the predicament of the Africano - Americans in the early part of the 20th Century, which provides the background against which their movements during this period should be viewed, certain important facts ought to be borne in mind.

Perhaps the most important of all is the fact that although the Africano - Americans were able, after considerable struggle and suffering, to obtain freedom in 1863 when slavery was formally abolished, raising their expectations, yet the relief ensuing from it was not very substantial. However, one important consequence of the emancipation for Africano - Americans was their freedom to migrate. African slaves had remained overwhelmingly concentrated in the South right till the early years of the 20th Century. There they had supplied for long the labor needed for the cultivation of cotton, tobacco, rice, sugar cane and indigo upon which the prosperity of the South rested. Sick and tired of their lot in the South, the Africano - Americans developed a romantic notion of the state of affairs in the North. This led to their continuous emigration to the Northern states commencing from the early years of the 20th Century on. During the first three decades of the 20th Century alone, 2.25 million Africano - Americans migrated to the North.

It did not take long for Africano - Americans to realize that their dreams remained far from realization. Many had looked forward not only to material prosperity but also to freedom, equality and justice,

only to discover that their lot had hardly improved. The Great Depression of 1929 and subsequent years aggravated their problems by creating large scale unemployment, causing them indescribable suffering and agony. All this was in addition to the frequent acts of lynching against them and their continual subjection to discrimination in ways altogether offensive to human dignity.

This situation gave rise to two seemingly different responses :

- 1) rise of movements of a secular nationalist character ; and
- 2) rise of religious movements and personalities.

The most potent manifestation of the secular nationalist response to the contemporary predicament of the Africano - Americans was the movement founded by a Jamaican Black called Marcus Garvey (d. 1940). Garvey emphasized the African identity of the Negroes, as they were then called, and urged them to seek their destiny independent of the Whites. His ardent enthusiasm for African heritage and for the Black color, characteristic of Africans, is epitomized in a slogan that was to considerable popularity among the Africano - Americans: "Black is beautiful".

Garveyism was primarily a nationalist movement and was quite secular in spirit. Garvey identified the problem of Africano - Americans with that of colonialism. In 1914, he envisioned uniting the Negro peoples of the World into one great body, to establish a country and a government absolutely their own. The Negroes in diaspora were required to go back to their native land, Africa. In order to bring about their awakening and to mobilize them for the achievement of their national objectives, Garvey established the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). He also established the Black Star Lines which would transport the Negroes to Africa.

Garvey advocated racial purity, racial integrity, and racial hegemony. He sought to organize Negroes in USA into a vanguard for African's redemption from colonialism, and hoped to lead them back to Africa. One of the major instruments that he wished to use was

economic cooperation through racial solidarity. He believed that if the Negroes of the World could be united together by the consciousness of race and nationality they could become a great and powerful people. His movement and philosophy are reflected in the following statement of objectives :

"To establish a universal confraternity among the race ; to promote the spirit of pride and love ; to reclaim the fallen ; to administer and to assist the needy ; to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa ; to assist in the development of independent Negro nations and communities ; to establish a central nation for the race ; to establish commissaries or agencies in the principal countries and cities of the World for the representation of all Negroes ; to promote a conscientious spirit of worship among the native tribes of Africa ; to establish universities, colleges, academies and schools for the racial education and culture of the people ; to work for better conditions among Negroes everywhere" (36).

Carvey's movement gave a very large number of Africano - Americans a new consciousness of their worth and a fresh confidence in their future. His movement fired the imagination of a people who were desperate for a new hope and a new purpose. However unrealistic programs might be, Garvey's assertion of racial pride evoked the sympathy and support of thousands of suffering Africano - Americans.

Even though Garvey had created a popular stir, he encountered serious problems. Influential sections of the Africano - American Community bitterly pitted themselves in opposition to him. This was in addition to his arousing the hostility of the American establishment. His economic projects, especially the Black Star Lines, also did not prove successful. In fact he got embroiled in a succession of court cases in which he was indicted for resorting to fraudulent practices. Eventually, he was convicted and deported to his native country, Jamaica, in 1925. Gradually Garveyism lost its appeal.

Apart from this predominantly secular movement, there also arose several movements among Africano - Americans which, even if they were activated by some secular nationalist objectives, they expressed themselves in religious terms. The racial segregation which characterized American life was so pervasive that it even embraced their religious life. Thus, there were exclusively Negro churches for Africano - Americans since the White churches were disinclined to open their doors to them. To many Africano - Americans, the Negro Church was merely a fact of life, among the many undesirable things that they had gotten used to. However, mowed by counter racism, some Africano - Americans began to glorify the religious dimension of their Black identity. In fact, Black identity became the foundation and the moving force of several millenarian movements led by such charismatic Africano - American leaders as Daddy Grace and Father Divine (37, 38).

During the early decades of the 20th Century, a large number of Africano - Americans, especially those in some or the Northeastern states of USA, began to identify themselves with Islam. This was more evident in the case of those Africano - Americans who had only recently migrated from the South. It is significant, as Kly pointed out, that Noble Drew Ali and Elijah Muhammad, the two most prominent figures who emphasized Islam as the central fact of Africano - American identity, had migrated from the Georgia/South Carolina region which had had an uninterrupted Islamic presence of significant proportions for long, in fact up until the 1940's (39).

In this context, two extremely important Africano - American religious cults that arose in the name of Islam will be examined, namely the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation or Islam. Both represent the first stirrings of Islamic revival among a people who had never completely forgotten that their ancestors were Muslims and who had begun to look upon Islam as a possible mean, to achieve their liberation and retrieve their dignity.

5 - The Moorish Science Temple Movement

The Moorish Science Temple was established by Timothy Drew (1866 - 1929) in Newark, New Jersey. Later, Moorish temples were established in Detroit, New York, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and in many cities across the South. The membership during the life of Timothy Drew, who decided to call himself Noble Drew Ali, reached as high as between 20,000 and 30,000. Noble Drew Ali scarcely had any formal education but had some conversance with oriental philosophy. He was much concerned with the identity problem of his people, and considered this to be of central importance. It was only when Africano - Americans would have a clear consciousness of their identity, he thought, that they would be able to develop self respect and dignity. Therefore, he declared that they were to be known as Asiatic or Moorish : "They must henceforth call themselves Asiatic, to use the generic term or more specifically the Moors or Moorish Americans" (40).

Consistent with this line of thinking, Noble Drew Al issued Nationality and Identification cards, each card bearing star and crescent, a known Islamic symbol. He honored Jesus Muhammad, Buddha and Confucius as Divine Prophets.

He identified himself with Islam, called himself and his followers "Moslems", and had a book which he called the "Holy Koran" (which, incidentally, was quite different from the Qu'ran). He was openly anti-White, treated them with open contempt, and believed that the Whites would be destroyed and the Asiatic would soon be in control. While the cult considered itself "Moslem", it emphasized the question of collective identity more than anything else. Noble Drew Ali believed that before a people can have a God they must have a nationality, (41). He declared the North African state of Morocco to be their nation. He also emphasized the importance of name as an indicator of one's identity. Strict morality was the keynote of the movement. The role of

the husband as protector and provider for his family was stressed. Hence, the so called Negroes should call themselves Asiatics, Moors or Moorish Americans (41, 42). On the other hand women were required to be good home makers and to obey their husbands. Several of these characteristics were to feature prominently in the Nation of Islam which arose after the decline of the Moorish Science Temple. According to some, the Nation of Islam was in fact a wing of the Moorish Temple after its split from within.

Noble Drew Ali also claimed himself to be the reincarnation of Muhammad, and called himself a prophet (43, 44). He was acquainted with certain aspects of Islamic teaching and became convinced that Islam was the only instrument for Negro unity and advancement.

According to legend, Noble Drew visited North Africa where he received commission from the King of Morocco. He also claimed to have met the President of USA in order to receive a charter for the propagation of Islam. His teachings are embodied in his "Holy Koran", which, strangely enough, bore a photograph of King Abdul-Aziz ibn Sa'ud of Arabia.

So far as Noble Drew Ali's "Holy Koran" is concerned, we might quote from Bontemps and Conroy : "Drew Ali had written and published his Koran, a slim pamphlet consisting of a curious mixture of the Mohammadan holy book of the same name, the Christian Bible, and the words of Marcus Garvey, and anecdotes of the life of Jesus, the whole bound together with the prophet's own pronouncements and interpretations" (45).

Noble Drew Ali died or was killed in 1929 at a time when severe splits arose among the Moors. Gradually the movement weakened, and it seems many of its members gradually joined the Nation of Islam. It is even contended that the founder of the Nation of Islam, Fard Muhammad, was a member of the Moorish Science Temple who established a movement of his own when the Moors were caught in the vortex of decline.

6 - The Nation of Islam Movement

The Moorish Science Temple was the direct forerunner of an immensely powerful movement that arose soon after the assassination of Noble Draw Ali. It was founded by, or arose around, the name of a mysterious silk peddler, whose complexion and features were almost those of a White man, and who began to preach in 1930 a set of doctrines to the Africano - Americans in Detroit. This man, who was called by many names, is generally known as Wallace D. Fard or Fard Muhammad (36, 40, 46).

Hardly anything can be said with certainty about the racial and geographical origins of Fard or about his life prior to his appearance in Detroit in 1930 (47). A number of divergent opinions have been expressed about him: that he was a Jamaican, a Palestinian, an Arab from Mecca belonging to the Quraysh tribe, a Turk, an Indian and even that he was a Jew. A few things are certain in regard to the teachings of Fard, however. He called the group that he organized in Detroit the "Allah Temple of Islam". He designated his own religious doctrine as Islam and sought to convert the Africano - Americans to it, claiming that it would liberate them from the dominance of the White race. He denounced the Whites as "blue eyed devils", "cave men", and "satans". As for himself, he seems to have claimed to be the Mahdi, and probably he either himself made the claim or was subsequently declared by his followers to be a prophet. Whether he called himself God or an incarnation of God is not quite clear; perhaps he did not. But it is certain that before 1940, the Nation of Islam believed that he was God-in-Person.

In 1934, Fard disappeared as mysteriously from the American scene as he had appeared on it. There was some rift and feuding in the Nation of Islam, but eventually one of Fard's followers, Elijah Muhammad, was able to establish himself as its leader. He retained that position from 1934 till the very end of his life in February, 1975.

Elijah Muhammad bolstered his authority by claiming himself to be the Messenger of Allah.

Despite the great emphasis placed on Islam, the religious doctrines of the Nation of Islam have little to do with the religious doctrines characteristic of Islam, the doctrines explicitly embodied in the Qur'an. A comparative study of the basic doctrines espoused by the Nation of Islam conclusively establishes that.

Concerning the concept of God, during 41 years (1934 - 1975), when Elijah Muhammed was the leader of the Nation of Islam, its concept of God was quite divergent from the Islamic one. The Nation of Islam emphasized that God is man, and that he is black, denouncing the concept of a non-material God as a deception of the devils.

The God of the Nation of Islam is so human that he even dies, a notion which is seemingly closer to Christianity than to Islam. Not only that, Elijah Muhammad also frequently employed the characteristically Christian expression "God-in-Person" with regard to Fard who is claimed to have come to North America for the redemption of his people, and who endured suffering and courted imprisonment in order to show his love to them. All these are reminiscent of Christian concepts such as those of incarnation and redemption by suffering. Presumably, these ideas were derived from the Christian milieu of North America where the movement arose.

The Nation of Islam identified God with W.D. Fard, and called him "God-in-Person". Whose incarnation is or was he ?

This brings us to another aspect of Elijah Muhammad's concept of God: its corporate ness. Allah, as conceived by him, to borrow the words of Eric Lincoln : "is not a godhead complete in himself" (48). Allah seems to be identified with the collective entity of the Original People, the Black People, the Righteous. The Qur'anic statement about God that He is the first and the last (57:3) has been interpreted by the Nation of Islam to mean that the Black Man is the first and the last, that he is the maker and owner of the Universe. The Black God who

created the heavens and the earth does not exist. It is true that this God was not begotten but He did beget Others (Qur'an 112:3) since His descendants exist. Thus, the Blacks are considered the descendants of this God in a purely biological sense and hence they are Originals ; they are righteous and partake of divinity. All Blacks are God (Allah), and one of them is the Supreme Being (49).

The divergence of such a concept of God from that entertained by Muslims all over the World is too evident even to need any elaboration.

The same divergence from Islam characterizes the Nation's doctrines regarding prophethood and especially their belief relating to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) (50).

The Nation of Islam shares with Muslims belief in the prophethood of the earlier prophets such as Noah, Abraham, etc... They also consider Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (peace be on him) to be one of them, and also acknowledge that the Qur'an was revealed to him.

However, it is striking that reference to the Holy Prophet in the writings of Elijah Muhammad is scarce, is couched in highly matter of fact phraseology, and lacks the warmth, love and devotion which characterize a Muslim's attitude towards him. It is also significant that quite often when Elijah Muhammad or his spokesmen enumerate prophets and messengers, the name of Muhammed is either missing, or is not mentioned in unmistakably clear terms. What is much more significant is that occasionally when Muhammad (peace be on him) is mentioned, the one meant is Elijah Muhammad rather than the Prophet (peace be on him).

Then, what was the standpoint of Elijah Muhammad regarding the status of Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (peace be on him) ? It is obvious that Elijah Muhammad, like the Qadiyanis, does not believe that Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (peace be on him) was the last prophet and Messenger of Allah. Almost ever since the disappearance of Fard, Elijah Muhammad consistently claimed that he was the Messenger of

Allah, and at least since 1960 that he was the last Messenger of Allah. Perhaps the official doctrine of the Nation of Islam relating to Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (peace be on him) was adequately expressed by Elijah Muhammad when he said that the former was "a sign of the real Muhammad" (51). At least in the 1970's, the Nation of Islam seems to have been of the view that Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was not a prophet or messenger in his own right but that his prophethood was merely a reflection of the prophethood of the real Muhammad (i.e. Elijah Muhammad) (51).

This tendency led the Nation of Islam, again and again, to compare Elijah Muhammad with prophets, including Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (peace be on him), and to claim that the former was incomparably superior to all of them. His alleged superiority, is claimed on several grounds. The knowledge or truth given to the prophets, according to Bernard Cusheer (52), was inferior since it was a mixture of facts and imagination and that their grasp of the truth was limited. On the contrary, Elijah Muhammad's understanding of the truth was indeed perfect because of the formers direct contact with Allah (i.e. Fard) since Fard was Elijah Muhammad's teacher (let alone his guest). No prophet, including Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah (peace be on him), had ever enjoyed that privilege (53).

Thus, no prophet, including the Prophet Muhammad, was considered by the Nation of Islam, especially during the last years of Elijah Muhammad's life, to be on the same level as the latter. The former, in their opinion, did not understand "the full reality of God", and "the depths of the sum of the teachings of the Qur'an" and "had nowhere near the knowledge of such subjects as astronomy as Messenger Elijah Muhammad has". The Holy Prophet, according to Elijah Muhammad, "did not receive from Allah all the truth... that Muhammad of Arabia never saw his teacher" (54).

Functionally speaking, in the Islamic tradition, prophet-hood is the vehicle for the communication of God's guidance. Muslims believe

that this guidance is embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the latter being the authoritative explanation, elaboration and exemplification of the Qur'an by the Prophet (peace be on him). Laying claim to full fledged prophet-hood, Elijah Muhammad invested himself with all the authority which, in the Islamic tradition, belongs only to the prophets and messengers of God, and which was conferred finally by God on Muhammad (peace be on him) since in him prophet-hood reached its apogee and came to an end.

As for Elijah Muhammad, a natural corollary of his claim to prophet-hood was the belief that his interpretations of the Scriptures are authoritative. Among the Scriptures, Elijah Muhammad assigns a special position to the Qur'an and evinces for it a large measure of respect. This attitude to the Qur'an, which was revealed, after all, to someone other than Elijah Muhammad, would seem somewhat strange in the context of Elijah Muhammad's claims about his own unique status. This paradox is perhaps resolved were we to keep in mind Elijah Muhammad's claim to be the only authoritative interpreter of all Scriptures, including the Qur'an, to be the real Muhammad. It is obviously on the basis of this authority that Elijah Muhammad had changed the form of the ordained prayer and replaced the lunar month of Ramadan for fasting by the solar month of December. In fact, despite what the Qur'an has to say on this point, Elijah Muhammad remains unconvinced about the way fasting is traditionally observed by Muslims on ground of Qur'anic prescription.

In like manner, the Nation of Islam's concept of the Hereafter varies fundamentally from the Islamic concept (55). Stated succinctly, the Islamic doctrine of the Hereafter signifies that following the destruction of the present cosmic order at an appointed time in the future, when all men will be resurrected and will be judged by the all knowing, all powerful, absolutely just and merciful God Who will reward the righteous with eternal bliss and happiness in Heaven, and punish the unrighteous with suffering in Hell. The Nation of Islam

also believes in the Hereafter. However, the actual content of their doctrine is vitally linked with the characteristic assumptions and concerns of the Nation of Islam and vary totally from the Islamic doctrine of the Hereafter.

In order to grasp the Nation of Islam's doctrine concerning the Hereafter, one must keep in mind that the White man, who is also called the man of sin, the devil, etc..., is considered to have been "made" about 6,000 years ago and to have been granted a term of 6,000 years to rule over the world. The period of White rule is characterized by the prevalence of evil and corruption. This period of history is termed by the "Nation of Islam" as "this world" or "this world of sin". By contrast, the "Hereafter" is the period which will follow the end of the dominance of the White man and the destruction of his "world sin", a period that would inaugurate the never-ending role of the Original or Righteous man.

The "Hereafter" will be preceded by the judgement of "Allah". This judgement, too, will take place on earth. The coming of "Allah" (Fard) which coincides with the lapse of the term of 6,000 years granted to the White man to dominate the earth is seen to be the major event which will lead to the Hereafter. "Allah" in the person of Fard came in order to rescue His people, the Black men, to resurrect them from their death like state, and to punish and destroy the Whites.

The Nation of Islam's concept of resurrection can be better grasped if we were to bear in mind that they conceive of no life beyond the grave. According to Elijah Muhammad, the so called Negroes of America are at present a dead people ; and resurrection means nothing else but the mental resurrection of those dead people, their attaining to the consciousness that the time had come for them to get justice.

Quite consistent with these ideas is the concept of Heaven and Hell. These signify conditions of earthly life rather than states of supra-terrestrial, and post-terrestrial existence. Also in order to experience Heaven and Hell one need not wait until one's death.

Heaven and Hell are the conditions which exist on this earth and which human beings experience during their lives.

Heaven, as described by Elijah Muhammad, is enjoyment of peace of mind and contentment with the God of the righteous and the Nation of the righteous. It consists of "enjoyment and unlimited progress in the new world of universal peace and happiness unlike anything seen, heard or imagined since the creation of the Universe". However, the full flowering of this Heaven will take place after the end of the era of White dominance. In that state, the righteous will enjoy the spirit of gladness and happiness for ever in the presence of Allah. It will be a condition of absolute peace and brotherhood which will exclude even the possibility of disagreement. It will be a new life wherein even those who are a thousand years old will remain young and look like teenagers of sixteen (56).

Muslims who look at these religious doctrines from their perspective are prone to be scandalized by them, especially by statements claiming W. D. Fard was Allah and Elijah Muhammad his messenger. However, were such statements to be seen in the context of the Africano - American cults of the time, they would make some sense. For esoteric claims such as these had already become a well established tradition among the Africano - American cults. It would be illuminating to look at some of these doctrines in the context of the Black cults of the time to explore their possible sources. The belief that Fard was God's incarnation is, in any case, not as outlandish in a Christian society as it is in a Muslim one. Moreover, claims of divinity had been made and accepted in USA in the period which concerns us. Two best known examples are those of Father Divine and Daddy Grace. Likewise, the claim to be a prophet or messenger of God was also not unprecedented. In fact the same spirit which was evident in the claims for divinity was implicit in the claims of prophethood. A little before the appearance of Fard, Noble Drew Ali had been accepted by his followers as a prophet. Another religious preacher

named Cherry was also considered a prophet and claimed to have received his mantle directly from God. Likewise, Bishop Ida Robinson claimed to have been ordained by God.

The Nation of Islam denial of after life in the generally understood sense of the term also appears highly shocking to Muslims. However, it should be viewed in the background of the excessive other worldliness of the Christian church in 20th Century America. It was not uncommon to look upon this excessive emphasis on the after world as a means to divert the attention of Africano - Americans from their sordid state of existence. The emphatic promise of a pie in the heaven implied that the Africano - Americans should be satisfied with their raw, un-buttered bread on earth.

Whatever be the actual sources of the religious doctrines of the Nation of Islam, the success of the movement seemed to lie in its capacity to satisfy some of the most deeply felt urges of a considerable segment of the Africano - Americans of the urban North. These doctrines and their identification with Islam only show that a good number of Africano - Americans had then begun their quest for salvation beyond the confines of the formal Christian Church and the accepted value structure of the American society.

The demonization, in quite a literal sense, of the White Man by the Black Muslims might be crude, and their view of God unsophisticated, and on the whole, unconvincing. And yet those doctrines served a major purpose : they created a new sense of belonging and enabled the converts to look towards the future with serene self-confidence.

The Nation of Islam could also feel justifiably proud of having given thousands of Africano - Americans a higher purpose of life. It reformed the lives of a very large number of persons, changing habitual criminals into law abiding citizens. It promoted what was in America a different concept of womanhood, and was able to bring stability in the family life of its followers. It also brought about significant economic improvement in the lives of its followers by

encouraging them to become active and productive as individuals, and to cooperate in constructive economic ventures.

During the last ten years of Elijah Muhammad's life, the Nation of Islam faced several serious problems, some of which were of an intellectual character. Elijah Muhammad seems to have been seized by a dilemma. For he was at once drawn to two different poles, was pulled in two different directions. On the one hand, he stressed his identification with the Muslims and called upon his people to embrace Islam. He made it a point to publicize his relations with Muslim dignitaries abroad. The letters or cables sent to Elijah Muhammad by Muslim heads of states or distinguished religious leaders of Muslim countries were greatly publicized. All this enhanced the position and prestige of Elijah Muhammad among the Africano - Americans. At the same time, it also created among his followers a sense of belonging to the Muslim Ummah (even though it was not as clear and strong as their sense of belonging to the Nation of Islam). On the other hand, Elijah Muhammad was exceedingly eager to retain the separate entity of his group, an entity separate even from the "Muslims of the East", as he called them. Had his doctrines been exactly identical with Islam, it would have been impossible for him to retain this distinct entity. In order to ensure this distinctness, Elijah Muhammad stressed the unique position of the Africano - Americans and also took great pains to keep his followers insulated from all extraneous influences, especially from the influence of the "Muslims of the East".

It became quite evident within weeks after his death in 1975 that he did not quite succeed in that. His own son and successor, Wallace Muhammad, took a radically different line from his father. The Nation of Islam had identified itself with the name of Islam. Wallace Muhammad carried this nominal identification with Islam to its logical conclusion : a conscious acceptance of the teachings of Islam.

7 - The Impact of Malcolm X

The late 1950's and the early 1960's saw the Nation of Islam rise to great heights of popularity. This was the period when the Africano - Americans were actively struggling for achieving equality of status, integration, and an amelioration of their economic condition. The major issue was that of integration, or educational institutions and public facilities, especially public transport. A section of the White liberals and large sections of the Africano - Americans were engaged in this struggle under the banner of such organization as NAACP, and under such leaders as the Southern Baptist pastor Martin Luther King Jr.

The Nation of Islam offered an alternative to the integrationist ideal ; it offered the ideal of separation. Rather than try to become integrated with the Whites, they emphasized that the interests and the dignity of the Africano - Americans could only be ensured by separating from the Whites, religiously, socially, economically, and even politically. The idea of separation was pushed by Elijah Muhammad as far as to demand sufficient land in the South of USA for the establishment of a state of the Africano - Americans. But it was his second in command, the charismatic Malcom X, who mainly carried the message of separation with great vigor to the teeming masses of Africano - Americans. He was able to electrify and mobilize many of them by his extraordinary oratorical skill, his defiant posture, and his remarkable courage. Early in April 1964, Malcom X disavowed this position and embraced Islamic universalism.

There are some specific reasons for Malcom X's conversion to which we shall refer shortly. However, it would also be useful to bear in mind some changes of a broad character that were taking place since the early 1950's in USA, including in the Nation of Islam, for they also contributed to the change in the intellectual orientation of those who eventually opted in favor of the Islamic mainstream.

In the 1950's the number of Muslim immigrants considerably increased and they became active in Islamic affairs. The Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA), which was formed in 1952, held its annual conventions which drew a good number of Muslims from different parts of USA and Canada. This created a greater sense of unity among Muslims and also gave fresh impetus to Islamic activity. The establishment of the Muslim Students Association (MSA) in 1963 was an even more impactful event. MSA organized Muslim students on the campuses and initiated activities which were to improve the awareness of Islam in the American society as a whole. Thus, the teachings of orthodox Islam were becoming increasingly known. The result was that an increasing number of people began to feel that the doctrines espoused by the Nation of Islam had scarcely anything to do with the true Islam.

Elijah Muhammad had himself been in touch with, and had made use of some of these immigrant Muslims, Jamil Diab, Abdul Basit Naeem, Zaiul Hasan, etc..., either as friends, or to teach Arabic and Islam to his followers, or to be his spokesmen to other Muslims. This naturally made them come into contact with the members of the Nation of Islam, especially with those in the higher echelon of the movement, and especially with the members of Elijah Muhammad's family. Moreover, some members of his family and Malcolm X visited Saudi Arabia and some other countries of the Middle East. It was presumably this kind of exposure to the "Muslims of the East" that sowed the first seeds of doubt. This doubt was the outcome of discovering that virtually a billion Muslims of the world had nothing to do with much of what Elijah Muhammad taught his followers as "Islam". Also, when these followers studied Qur'an, they discovered that there was no sanction for several of Elijah Muhammad's teachings.

It was because of the discontent thus created that some members of the Nation of Islam broke off from the Nation of Islam and joined the

mainstream Islam. Towards the end of the 1950's, the National Secretary of the Nation of Islam, who renamed himself Hammas Abdul-Khalis, left the Nation of Islam and formed a parallel group of his own. A few years later, in the 1960's, three persons of major significance, two of the sons of Elijah Muhammad (Akbar Muhammad and Wallace Muhammad) and above all, his main spokesman, Malcolm X, also converted to orthodox Islam (57). Of these, the departure of Malcolm X from the Nation of Islam proved to be a great catalyst, prompting many Africano - Americans to identify with Islamic orthodoxy.

Malcolm X has himself narrated in great detail how he was led away, step by step, from his leader in whom his faith for well over a decade had been total, from one whom he quite literally believed to be the Messenger of Allah. In 1963, a series of incidents shook Malcolm X's faith in Elijah Muhammad, especially since those incidents revealed that the latter did not care to practice the morality he preached. Elijah Muhammad took a stern disciplinary action against Malcolm X in November 1963, prohibiting him to make any public speech or issue any public statement. This came as a rude shock to Malcolm X, who became convinced that the action was part of a conspiracy, which he had hatched in concert with his opponents, and aimed at destroying his position. Initially, it was not Malcolm X's discontent with the religious doctrines of Elijah Muhammad, but his unhappiness with, what seemed to him, the compromising sexual behaviour of Elijah Muhammad, and then his adoption of a posture that appeared unjustifiably hostile, which drove him to leave the Nation of Islam early in 1964.

Once Malcolm X was out of the Nation of Islam, he felt no compulsion to literally adhere to its religious doctrines. The opportunity to read more extensively about Islam, to exchange views with other dissidents in the Nation of Islam, especially Wallace Muhammad and Akbar Muhammad, and his contacts with Muslims

outside his original group were pushing him in a different direction. All this culminated with his Hajj in April 1964. During the Hajj, Malcolm X became acutely conscious of the "color-blindness" of Islam, and quite soon he was led to believe that the doctrines he had learned from the Nation of Islam had no locus standi in Islam. This was apart from the moving experience of universal human brotherhood during the Hajj which demolished the very kernel of the racist doctrine (or, shall we say, the counter-racist doctrine) espoused by Elijah Muhammad. The letters Malcolm X wrote from Saudi Arabia vividly articulate this moving experience and its impact upon him :

"Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors".

"I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca... There were tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the White and the non-White... I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color..."

"On this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to rearrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions..."

"During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug), while praying to the same God, with

fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the "white" Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana".

We were truly all the same (brothers), because their belief in one God had removed the "white" from their minds, the "white" from their behavior, the "white" from their attitude" (58).

On returning to USA after this soul-shaking event, Malcolm X who renamed himself Al-Hajj Malik Shabazz, became and remained occupied till the very end of his life in February 1965, with rearranging his ideas. While his ideas remained in a constant state of flux, he gave vent to two different, though not necessarily contradictory, sets of ideas. First, although he discarded the concept of the inherent and incorrigible perversity of the Whites, he remained as ardent and as uncompromising as ever before, in his struggle to put an end to the degradation to which the Africano - Americans and even made an effort to unite with all Africano - Americans leaders, including the leaders of the Civil Rights movement such as Martin Luther King, Jr., whom he had earlier ridiculed. As for the common Africano - Americans, his message to them was not to be intimidated by the violence that might be unleashed against them. Contrary to the philosophy of non-violence preached by Martin Luther King, Jr., he urged Africano - Americans to have recourse to the gun in self-defense. Moreover, he attempted to develop contacts with the leaders of African and Muslim countries with the intent of internationalizing their question.

Malcolm X established one organization each to institutionalize these two concerns. The Muslim Mosque, Inc., embodied his commitment to spread that version of Islam which he had embraced after his Hajj. The second organization was the League of Africano -

American Unity, concerned with the liberation of Africano - Americans, by any means necessary.

Thus, the last year of Malcolm X's life, which was full of hectic activity, had a two-fold impact on Africano - Americans. On the one hand, his work provided a powerful impetus to such radical movements as the Black Power of the mid-1960's and to the emergence of militant groups such as the Black Panthers.

No less consequential was the impact of Malcolm X's espousal of Orthodox Islam, with the result that he became, in the eyes of a large number of Muslims of his country, and to some extent, even outside, the symbol of Sunni Islam in America. The expression "Sunni Islam" was used in contradistinction to the Nation of Islam rather than in opposition to the Shi'ah.

From 1965 onwards, a number of Sunni Africano - American groups arose or were strengthened. Malcolm X had provided a very powerful impetus for this development and became their main inspiration in their journey to orthodox Islam. Despite mutual disagreements the Africano - American Sunni groups were agreed in looking up to Malcolm X as their hero, their ideal, as one who had become dearer to them after his brutal assassination. But even those who might not fully agree with Malcolm X's ideas, still recognized his role as a water-shed in the present century's history of Islam in America (59). To what extent the phenomenon is causally related to Malcolm X's espoused of the Islamic mainstream, the fact remains that the 1960's witnessed a conspicuous growth of Sunni Islam among Africano - Americans.

8 - The Rise of Sunni Muslim Africano - American Movements

One of these Sunni groups which arose in the 1960's, acquired considerable prominence and remained occasionally in the news, was the Hanafi Madhhad Center. This group acquired special importance

during the 1970's. With its headquarters in Washington, D.C., it was headed by Hammas Abdul-Khalis, who was at one time the National Secretary of the Nation of Islam but had subsequently left it in 1958. Abdul-Khalis was under the influence of a scholar from what is now Bangladesh, but was then part of Pakistan, and it was from him that he learned the fundamentals of orthodox Islam.

Abdul-Khalis was a very zealous and energetic person. After leaving the Nation of Islam, he focused his efforts on converting his former comrades to orthodox Islam. He wrote letters to the members of the Nation of Islam, vociferously pleading that they part company with the Nation of Islam for its doctrines were wrong and its leader, Elijah Muhammad, was a false prophet. The group formed by Abdul-Khalis called itself Hanafi Madhab Center presumably because his mentor, like most Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent, belonged to the Hanafi school, and regarded it as the most authentic form of Islam.

The group was strengthened circa 1970 when the star basketball player, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, joined it and, according to popular belief, bought for it its headquarters in Washington D.C. This further boosted the importance of the Hanafis. Around the same time Abdul-Khalis launched the drive to convert the members of the Nation of Islam by writing letters to them. The letters were full of vehement denunciation of Elijah Muhammad and of his teachings and actions. This brought Abdul-Khalis a very sharp reprisal. Some of his opponents, who were later identified as belonging to the Nation of Islam temple in Philadelphia, entered Abdul-Khalis' home. They shot his wife and his daughter, and they drowned three of his other children and his nine-day-old grand-daughter (60).

In March 1977, the Hanafis again made headlines. Abdul-Khalis with some of his followers took over Washington D.C. 's City Hall, the Islamic Center, and the office of B'nai Brith. Holding hostages, Abdul-Khalis demanded that the movie called "The Messenger", which offended his religious sensibilities, be withdrawn from the

theatres, and the men convicted of killing his family members as well as those convicted of assassinating Malcolm X, be delivered to him. Abdul-Khalis finally surrendered as a result of the persuading efforts of Muslim ambassadors. He was ultimately sent to prison to serve a long term of imprisonment.

However, over the years the group seems to have declined. The best known supporter of the Hanafi Madhab Center, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, himself became disenchanted. According to him, Abdul-Khalis "got into a personality cult featuring him. It got bad..." (60). What is important to remember is that while those who had been attracted to the group, and a good instance of it is Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, might have quit the Hanafi Madhab Center but they retained their association with orthodox Islam.

At the doctrinal level, the Hanafis emphasize that they are Sunnis, and also that they are guided by the Qur'an and the Hadith, and that they believe in Muhammad (peace be on him) as the last prophet of God.

The Hanafis also took special interest in presenting the teachings of Islam to Africano - Americans and informing them that Islam does not recognize distinction of race and color. While membership figures are not available, they were estimated to be several hundred. Their mosques are located in Washington D.C., New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. In recent years, the Hanafis are not much in the limelight, although a great many of them presumably remain associated with the Islamic mainstream.

Another Sunni Africano - American organization, and the most powerful one in that category, was Darul-Islam (61). It took its formal shape in the early 1960's. The most prominent figure that emerged in that group was that of Yahya Abdul-Kareem. In 1962, the members pledged to follow the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and to keep to the Shari'ah. In 1963, all the 40 to 50 members repudged

themselves. It did not take long for their members to increase to 150. However, internal conflicts soon developed.

In 1967, the idea of Black Power caught the imagination of many Africano - Americans. The pith of the idea was that Africano - Americans should control their own affairs and destiny, that they should protect themselves and, when needed, fight their enemies... The summer of 1967 witnessed no less than 40 racial riots. As a sequel, several self-defense groups arose among the Africano - Americans. These were largely patterned after the Fruit of Islam organization of the Nation of Islam.

All available evidence suggests that the impetus to build an independent Darul-Islam came not only from the concerned persons' commitment to Islam, but also from an Africano - American nationalist consciousness popular at the time. In other words, the Darul-Islam members were not only concerned with translating the vision of an ideal Islamic life into practice, but were also concerned to defend and promote the interests of Africano - Americans.

Darul-Islam gradually grew into a popular and influential movement. While it remained headquartered in New York City, its influence spread to several states of North America. By 1975, it had become the largest indigenous Sunni group in the country. Its main area of influence extended mainly to the cities along the eastern seaboard and in all of its larger metropolitan towns. It became one of the main groups which challenged the Nation of Islam at almost every level.

Darul-Islam resembled some of the strict, albeit activist orthodox Muslim groups of the Muslim world. They emphasized strict adherence to the Shari'ah. They stressed that men should have beards, and women should cover their head. They emphasized that Muslims should not resemble non-Muslims in their appearance, a view they supported by reference to a well-known Hadith on the subject : "He who makes himself resemble a people, is one of them". The Muslims

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who wore Western dresses and followed the Western lifestyle were considered deviant and were looked down upon.

It may be remarked that in the early part of his life, Imam Yahya Abdul-Kareem had been under the influence of Maqbool Elahi, a scholar from Pakistan who held classes on Islam in New York, and then studied in Pakistan under the late Dr. Fazlur-Rahman Ansari who was at once a theologian and a Sufi. It so happened that in 1982, the Sufi seeds that perhaps lay largely dormant in Yahya Abdul-Kareem's soul were activated and sprouted forth. Yahya declared that Darul-Islam had ceased to exist, and that they had become a part of an international Jamaat al-Ghuraba with a Pakistani called Shaykh Mubarak Ali Jamil Al-Hashmi as their leader. A part of the movement, headed by Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, formerly H. Rap Brown, the former Chairman of SNCC after Stokely Carmichael, broke away from the main group and called itself Darul-Islam. But the movement soon lost its appeal and strength.

Wherein lay the strength of Darul-Islam ? Why did it attract a large number of Africano - Americans ? What was its main contribution ? Mukhtar Curtis has attempted to answer these questions in his study on Darul-Islam :

"Islam offered to Dar members a lucid, divinely ordained value system with a promise of rewards and punishments in this life and the hereafter. It included a set of daily behaviors that distinguished a practicing Muslim from others. The believer required no skills in deconstructionism to understand Islamic monotheism nor was one's worry that the divine text, the Qur'an, was subject to alteration... The second Islamic criterion, the Prophet's behavior, was also not subject to revision, was made available in hadith translations. The simplicity of the basic tenets of Islam and its consonance with certain aspirations of Blacks, particularly those who desired a culture and polity separate from and not dominated by White America, made Islam and Dar attractive. The converts personified many of the individual attributes

associated with Malcolm X. such as readiness for self-defense, a disciplined traditional morality, and an exemplary strong African American manhood..."

"On a societal scale the hope was that the Muslim communities would become independent and self-contained with their own political, economic and defense systems. The ultimate earthly hope was that the Dar faithful would form a sovereign state" (62).

Still another Africano - American religious group which stands somewhere in between such one as Daral-Islam, which is a fully Sunni group, and those considered sectarian and heterodox, is the group of the Ansarullah (Ansar).

The Ansar emerged in the convulsive period of the 1960's, and like some other groups, its ideology is an amalgam of Islam and Black Nationalism. This group was established by an Africano - American who had an occasion to visit Sudan. On return to USA, he claimed to be a descendant of the great Mahdi of Sudan Muhammad ibn Abd Allah (d. 1885). He gave himself the name of Al-Hajj Al-Imam Isa Abd-Allah Muhammad Al-Hadi Al-Mahdi. He claimed that Al-Hadi Al-Madi, who had been killed in 1969, had come to USA long ago, married an Africano - American woman and then had returned to Sudan. He claimed to have been born of that marriage and was thus the grandson of the great Mahdi.

The Ansar emphasized dress worn by the Ansar in Sudan, a long, loose garment for men and an Arabian-like garment for women. They also emphasized the importance of learning Arabic and urged the Ansarullah to speak to their children in that language.

The Ansar, who later adopted the appellation "Nubian Islamic Hebrew Mission", firmly believe in the unity of God and insist that no other word but Allah may be used for Him. Likewise, they believe in Muhammad (peace be on him) as the final prophet. They believe, in addition to the Qur'an, in other scriptures, the Old Testament, the Psalms of David, and the New Testament.

The Ansar believe in certain doctrines which are peculiar to them alone. They believe, for instance, that after the Flood, Ham desired to commit sodomy while looking at his father's nakedness which led to the curse of leprosy on Ham's fourth son, Canaan, making he skin pale. It was thus that pale races came into being. The Amorites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Sidovites are sons of Canaan and their descendants. Mixing blood with these "sub-races" is not lawful for the Nubians. This seems to bear some resemblance to the myth popularized by the Nation of Islam that the Whites came into being as a result of the genetic experimentation of a Black scientist, Mr. Yakub, which led to the creation of a totally perverse race of the Whites.

The Ansar have not been as severely opposed by orthodox Muslims as were the Nation of Islam. This seems to be because they broadly subscribe to some of the fundamental tenets of Islam. It is presumably for this reason that the Ansar were invited to the First Islamic Conference of North America (63). On the other hand, there has been considerable uneasiness among orthodox Muslims about them because of several of their exotic doctrines, a sample of which has been mentioned above. One of the major objections to the Ansar is their acceptance of the Bible as a source of religious teachings as authoritative as the Qur'an (64). The group seems inclined to cling to these exotic doctrines for they serve the purpose of preventing its full assimilation into mainstream Islam. The change of the name of the group to Nubian Hebrew Islamic Association, among other things, seems to represent this desire to maintain a distinct entity of the group.

9 - The Conversion of the Nation of Islam to Orthodox Islam

Thus, during the 1960's and 1970's Sunni or orthodox Islam began to gain popularity among Africano - Americans. Apart from the two major Sunni Africano - American organizations mentioned above,

there were several others. Moreover, a large number of Africano - Americans converted to Sunni Islam and identified themselves with either local mosques and Islamic centers, or at least tried to remain faithful to the tenets of the faith they had embraced. But it was the year 1975 which marked the greatest moment of triumph for orthodox Islam. For it is then that Wallace D. Muhammad (who later renamed himself Warith Deen Muhammad), one of the sons of Elijah Muhammad, succeeded his father to the leadership of the Nation of Islam. W. D. Muhammad had in fact renounced, as far back as 1963, many of the doctrines of his father that were opposed to the teachings of Islam. Both he and his brother, Akbar Muhammad (at that time a student at al-Azhar in Egypt), formed a rebellious trio with Malcolm X. Thus, no sooner had W. D. Muhammad assumed the reins of leadership than he embarked on purging the Nation of Islam of its teachings to which the orthodox had long been objecting and bringing it in harmony with orthodox Islam. The entire operation was executed with great skill, with the result that a very good proportion of the rank and file of the Nation of Islam smoothly went along with the transition. This transition was termed by W. D. Muhammad as the "Second Resurrection", indicating thereby that while the content of his message was different it was essentially a continuation and culmination of the First Resurrection of the Africano - Americans brought about by his father at the instance of Fard Muhammad.

W. D. Muhammad did not lose much time in pointing out the errors of the doctrines of his father, although he did so with circumspection and dexterity. He attributed the doctrinal errors of his father mainly to the fact that it was part of strategy which Fard Muhammad and his father had adopted to gradually introduce the true teachings of Islam to the Africano - Americans. Since people at that time would not have been receptive to the true teachings of Islam, several incorrect ideas were inducted so as to make Islam palatable. Gradually, W. D. Muhammad was able to persuade his followers that

his father was not aware of the true teachings of Islam, and that his claim to be a prophet was not correct. Likewise, the Black-centeredness of the Nation of Islam was cleverly discarded in favor of Islamic universalism, and again this was accomplished by resorting to very ingenious arguments (65, 66, 67).

First, W.D. Muhammad threw open the doors of his movement to men of all racial origins, including Whites. This was done just a few months after his assumption of leadership. How revolutionary this step was can be gauged by the fact that for forty five year the members of the Nation of Islam had been taught that the Whites were, quite literally, devils. W. D. Muhammad justified the change by reinterpreting the racial doctrines of the Nation of Islam, contending that they had a symbolic rather than literal meaning. The word "White", said W. D. Muhammad, was a symbol of evil and "Black" was a symbol of goodness. Hence, anyone who is born white is not ipso facto evil. In fact, depending on his attitude of mind, a White man might in fact be Black (i. e. good), and vice versa.

Also, in the very first year of his leadership, W. D. Muhammad introduced the proper Islamic rituals of worship, discarding the distorted forms in which they had been practiced earlier. Likewise, W. D. Muhammad did not take long to discard the idea that his father was the Messenger of Allah. This, apart from the nation that Fard Muhammad was God-in-Person, was the major barrier between the Nation of Islam and orthodox Muslims. Within a matter of two to three years, W. D. Muhammad had fully convinced a majority of the members of the Nation of Islam that they ought to accept the teachings of Islam in the manner understood by the "world community of Islam".

In 1976, W. D. Muhammad also changed the name of the Nation of Islam to the "World Community of al-Islam in the West". This was a clever move on his part so as to disengage the minds of his followers from the past and to foster the universalism of Islam. In 1980, W. D.

Muhammad renamed his organization American Islamic Mission, Inc., which was dissolved in 1986 in order that his followers might become fully integrated with the Muslim Ummah.

10 - Examples of local African American Jamaats

The doctrinal re-orientation that took place under W. D. Muhammad, is well illustrated by the case of Masjid ul-Mutakabir in Poughkeepsie in the Hudson River Valley of New York State. This group has been competently studied by Kolars (68) and the profile of the community around Masjid al-Mutakabir that is essayed here is essentially based on the information provided by her.

The small city of Poughkeepsie had its branch of Nation of Islam when the mantle of its leadership fell on W. D. Muhammad in 1975. At that time this branch was headed by Minister Mark X. It was he who led this group through the transition, in the words of Kolars, "from proto-Islam to Islam", one early manifestation of the change being the change of Mark X's name to that of Sabir al-Hajji.

Masjid ul-Mutakabir is headquartered in a rented building and has a small membership, with twenty to thirty families who are active in the community on a regular basis. These families are Africano - Americans, and a number of the older members were associated with the Nation of Islam until 1975. The adult members are mostly married and family life is strongly emphasized by the society and its Imam. Abstinence from pre-marital and extra-marital sex, alcohol, and drugs are crucial elements in the doctrine of the community, and these topics are addressed on a regular basis in the Khutbah (sermon) of the Friday Prayer. The members have adapted Arabic first names, and many have retained their former first names along with the new Arabic-Muslim names. The children all have Arabic first names.

The Friday Prayer is regularly observed. The majority of the worshippers are men, but a small number of women also attend the

service. Islam is emphasized as the key element in determining the manner in which they should conduct their lives.

The interpretation of Islam adapted by the Masjid ul-Mutakabir community has had a great effect on male-female relations within the group. Although the doctrine encourages women to devote themselves to the raising of their children, it also supports their education and stresses their participation, as often as possible, in community activities. The education of women is emphasized as a Qur'anic imperative.

Although this mixture of encouragement to be both mother and community activist may seem contradictory, the movement interprets these aspects as two divisions of the woman's primary role as a teacher of children. This role is considered intrinsic to the community's existence and is viewed as perhaps the most important task in the structure of the Africano - American Muslim community. The task of good upbringing of children is emphasized. The remarks of the present Imam Shamsideen are significant : "I'm the head of the family. My wife takes care of our children. That's her duty. But if a decision needs to be made, I consult my wife. We are together, we can't make decisions without talking to the other person" (69).

The members of Masjid ul-Mutakabir have made a sincere effort to construct their own new Muslim identity, rejecting their Christian origins. Although they maintain contacts with the Africano - American community through their extended families, their main organized contact is through the other Africano - American masjids. Although the members of Masjid al-Mutakabir are devoutly religious and claim to have completely rejected their Christian upbringing, they maintain contacts with their non-Muslim family members despite religious differences. A frequent topic of Friday khutbah is the rejection of Christian beliefs, and the resistance of American culture. The doctrine of trinity is refuted as a doctrine inconsistent with the Islamic monotheism. The Imam stresses that while Jesus is recognized

as a prophet, the idea that he was of divine origin is held as unacceptable.

One of the consistent themes of the Friday khutbahs is the importance of maintaining a strong Muslim identity. In December 1991, when W. D. Muhammad visited the Hudson Valley, he addressed an audience of 3,000 Muslims, the majority of whom traveled from the area around to attend. This is indicative of the powerful leadership role that W. D. Muhammad continues to play as the mentor and symbolic leader of a large number of Africano - American Muslims despite his resignation as the leader of the Africano - American Islamic Mission in 1978.

In addition to the mosque, the group also has two major institutions to serve their objectives. One of these is the educational institution, called the Sister Clara Muhammad School which was established in 1987 (70). It is run as an uncertified home-study program and comes under the jurisdiction of the Poughkeepsie school district, and is subject to review by its board. The school is designed to serve the children of the Poughkeepsie Muslim community, but its primary efforts are directed towards the Africano - American children. The Sister Clara Muhammad School represents a long tradition of emphasis on education, since the earliest period of the Nation of Islam.

Africano - American children should be educated in schools of their own. These schools were, in the days of the Nation of Islam, an instrument for fostering the Black identity and Black pride. They also helped to create an institutional basis for the emphasis on self-awareness and self-help by the Nation of Islam. This feature continues to be dominant in the orthodox Africano - American Muslim community. The founding of the Sister Clara Muhammad serves as a proof of the continuing perceived need for special interest schools within the Africano - American community.

Imam Shamsideen states: "The main reason for having the kids out of public school... is because in public school they're not teaching the name of God... Education and all we do are to support our faith, that Allah is God, and that Muhammad is His Messenger" (71, 72).

Another institution of considerable importance is Baitul Nasr, which is a rehabilitative community help program in which members of the Masjid are involved. There is a therapeutic program to counsel clients on drug abuse ; violent behavior awareness program, and a program to provide shelter and resource for women and children in need. Baitul Nasr is also geared to helping former offenders to orient themselves to life outside the correctional facility. The Nation of Islam has a long record of playing effective rehabilitating role, and that continues at the present as well. Moreover, the prisons have also been a major recruitment-ground for proselytisation. Both in the past and in the present, many Africano - American serving prison terms have been converting to Islam.

One of the major effects of the transition of the Poughkeepsie branch of the Nation of Islam to orthodox Islam is that the degree of interaction between the Africano - American Muslims and the community of immigrant Muslims in the Hudson Valley area has increased. However, there exist several differences between the immigrant and the Africano - American Muslims here as elsewhere in America. These differences contribute to the maintenance, by each group, of its particular mosque and organizational structure. Apart from the obvious ethnic difference, there is considerable disparity in their income levels, educational standards, and occupations.

Thus, while there is a certain amount of interaction between the Poughkeepsie masjid, which despite its theoretical openness to all, is practically an African group, and the MidHudson Islamic Association which is essentially an immigrant group, the activities of each group internally focused. However, thanks to the acceptance of the orthodox Islamic doctrines by the members of Masjid ul-Mutakabir, a number

of immigrant Muslims also attend the services in it, although the majority of the worshippers are Africano - Americans. The two communities cooperate in various projects and it is not unusual for the neighboring Muslim community to ask the members of Masjid ul-Mutakabir for help in local projects. Any request is reciprocal in nature, and it is not unusual for the leading members of the immigrant community to attend the functions sponsored by the Africano - American Muslim community.

However, cooperation between the two communities is not highly developed, and there is no great overlap between membership or participation of the two groups. Significant differences such as language skills, vastly different cultural traditions, and above all, the wide disparity in the economic circumstances of the members of the two communities, still stand in the way of close interaction between them.

Another example of how Muslim communities have developed during the last half century is provided by the organization called the First Muslim mosque of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The present section is based on an interesting historical account provided by Hakim (73). The starting point here, unlike the case of Poughkeepsie, was the establishment of the Moorish Science Temple rather than the Nation of Islam. While the Moors declined as a whole after the death of Noble Drew Ali in 1929, they remained strong in Pittsburgh during the 1930's, having a membership of over 1,000.

The group in question consisted of Africano - American converts, some of whom were the sons and daughters of converts. However, a few Muslims from the East, or "from across the water", to use the jargon of the group, were also associated with it. Owing to the low standard of Islamic knowledge among the members, it became possible for Yusuf Kahn (sic), one of the immigrants from the South-Asian Subcontinent, to assume full charge of teaching Islam. Yusuf Kahn introduced the Qur'an and the Hadith to the group, taught them

the five daily prayers, and urged them to accept Muslim names. Kahn not only carried out instruction in Islam and Arabic, but also gave books and reading material. Before that, very few persons had seen a copy of the Qur'an.

Gradually it became known that Yusuf Kahn's teachings were not in harmony with the teachings of the Moorish Science Temple. This led to a split in the congregation and those who did not agree with the teachings of Yusuf Kahn left.

For a while all went well with the community. It kept attracting new members and the teaching program also proceeded well. Then sometime in 1935, a section of the community began to oppose a doctrine taught by Kahn, namely that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908) was a prophet. After heated discussion and debate, it became clear that the majority of the members would not "compromise on the finality of Muhammad's (peace be upon him) prophethood". This led to the second split in the group. Some of the members left and formed an Ahmadiyyah group which continued to operate in the city parallel to the original group.

While the main body remained intact, it had no leader. Eventually, they found their leader in Saeed Akmal who embarked on a drive to spread the teachings of Islam in Pittsburgh as well as in the outlying districts.

This is how there came into being in Pittsburgh a community and organization which was largely purged of the heterodox doctrines of both the Moorish Science Temple and the Ahmadiyyah. Thus, from a heterodox, sectarian beginning, the group moved towards identifying itself with the Islamic mainstream.

11 - Heterodox Organizations

Were we to compare the American scene toward the closing year of the present century with what it was at its outset, it would be

evident that Islam has come a long way. In numbers, it is on way to becoming the second largest religion in USA after Christianity. So far as the Africano - Americans are concerned, we find that Islam has progressed among them both horizontally and vertically. The tenets of Islam are today better known to a much larger number of Africano - Americans than ever before, and this knowledge is accompanied with an enhanced commitment to accept and follow those tenets. Moreover, although the revival of Islam among Africano - Americans in its early phase was of a sectarian and heretical character, in the course of time a large proportion of them has identified itself with the Islamic mainstream.

Notwithstanding these developments, one ought to be cautious against entertaining any romantic notions. For these developments which have strengthened Islam among the Africano - Americans do not detract from the fact that the gains made by Islam so far can be consolidated only after much effort, nor from the fact that many powerful forces at work in the American society have a constantly de-Islamizing effect on all Muslims living in America, including the African - Americans. Additionally, while orthodox Islam has made some considerable headway, there remain fairly powerful pockets of sectarianism and heterodoxy which are offering stiff resistance to assimilation, in the Islamic mainstream.

We have seen above how under W. D. Muhammad, the Nation of Islam underwent a significant doctrinal transformation. In fact for a few years it seemed that things were moving so smoothly and effectively in the direction of Islamic orthodoxy that it would gain a pervasive and decisive victory and will be able to overcome the schisms in the Muslim community in America. Such expectations have been only partially fulfilled. This is evident from the fact that while the majority of the Nation of Islam welcomed the reformist ideas of W. D. Muhammad, the change for many of them was just too much to talk. For some time these malcontents simply showed apathy.

In 1978, however, Louis Farrakhan, who had been very prominent in the leadership of the Nation of Islam during the last years of Elijah Muhammad's life, revived that movement with almost all its characteristic features. The only change under Farrakhan is in respect of religious rituals, prayers, fasting, etc... As for the religious teachings of the Nation of Islam, that Fard is Allah, that Elijah Muhammad was the Messenger of Allah, that the Blacks are the Originals and the Whites are an inherently evil people who are destined to be utterly destroyed by Allah in the near future, that the Judgment means the restoration of the supremacy of the Original and the Righteous Blacks, and that the Hereafter is the period of history which will follow the destruction of the Whites and the establishment of the supremacy of the Blacks, all of these have been retained.

Louis Farrakhan has not only tenaciously clung to these teachings, but has come forth with an impressive array of arguments that are quite appealing to those who were familiar with, and favorably disposed to, the rhetoric of the Nation of Islam. Also, W. D. Muhammad seems to have been so seized with the zeal to purge the Nation of Islam of all racist notions and to fully introduce Islamic universalism to such an extent that he showed little concern to voice the socio-economic grievances of the Africano - Americans who continue to be subjected to gross discrimination, injustice and indignity in the present-day American society. Furthermore, W. D. Muhammad also emphasized his identification with America with great zeal with the result that his detractors began to accuse him of having struck a deal with the establishment. In such circumstances, when Louis Farrakhan began to speak out vehemently for the rights of the Africano - Americans, he received a warm response not only from those who had a sympathetic predisposition towards Elijah Muhammad's doctrines, but also from a wide cross-section of Africano - Americans. All this proved advantageous to Louis Farrakhan who was able to win over the loyalties of many Africano -

Americans, quite a few of whom had been associated with the Nation of Islam in the days of Elijah Muhammad.

Louis Farrakhan has often been severely criticized for being anti-Semitic (i.e. anti-Jewish). His strong statements against the Jews, let alone White Americans, might have antagonized large sections of the American society, including an influential section of middle-class Africano - Americans. But judging from a purely pragmatic perspective, these statements have served one of Farrakhan's purpose, to win the support of the radically-disposed and underprivileged Africano - Americans, many of whom have indeed begun to look upon him as a possible redeemer.

Louis Farrakhan has been playing his role as leader of the revived Nation of Islam quite effectively. He does not seem inclined to strike any compromise with the Islamic mainstream, nor to modify any of the teachings of his mentor which Muslims find totally unacceptable. His un-compromising posture seems to stem, at least partially, from the desire to maintain the distinct entity of the flock that he shepherds. Such an objective certainly requires that Farrakhan should not abandon the characteristic doctrinal positions of the Nation of Islam (66, 74).

Another group which broke away from the Nation of Islam as far back as in 1964 under the leadership of Clarence "Pudding" 13% calls itself "The Five Percenters" or "The Nation of Gods and Earths". The center of this movement is New York City, especially Bronx. In New York City alone they are said to number in the thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands.

In order to grasp the doctrinal position of the group, it would be instructive to cast a glance at the nine points which they have listed under the banner "What We Teach" :

- 1- We teach that Black People are the Original People of the Planet Earth ;

- 2- We teach that Black People are the Mothers and Fathers of Civilization ;
- 3- We teach that the Science of Supreme Mathematic is the key to understanding man's relationship to the universe ;
- 4- We teach Islam as a natural way of life, not a religion ;
- 5- We teach that education should be fashioned to enable us to be self-sufficient as a people ;
- 6- We teach that each one should teach one according to their knowledge ;
- 7- We teach that the Blackman is God and his proper name is Allah (Arm Leg Leg Arm Head) ;
- 8- We teach that our children are our link to the future and they must be nurtured, respected, loved, protected and educated ;
- 9- We teach that the unified Black Family is the vital building block of the Nation.

Clarence Pudding 13% began to have doubts about the Nation of Islam in the early 1960's. The Nation of Islam had taught that the Black Man was God. Since Fard Muhammad was not black in appearance, how could he be God ? In 1964, there was turmoil in the Nation of Islam chiefly because of the differences between Malcolm X and its leadership. A disciplinary action was taken against Clarence in the manner it had been taken against Malcolm X, leading to the same result. Clarence left the Nation of Islam although he has clung to its basic doctrines, one important exception being the doctrine that Fard is God (75).

A recognition of the fact that both these movements, in addition to several minor splinter groups of the original Nation of Islam exist and that some of these enjoy considerable following among Africano - Americans, enables one to have a more realistic picture of the situation.

12 - Conclusions

Important demographic changes are taking place in USA, changes that are likely to be very consequential. We have noted earlier that the proportion of Africano - Americans in the total population of USA is likely to rise from an estimated 12,6% in 1995 to 16,2% in 2050. The same is true of Hispanics, whose growth rate is quite high and, according to projections, their proportion in the total population of USA will rise from 9,5% in 1992 to 21,1% in 2050 (75). Thus, the ethnic profile of USA seems poised for a substantial change with the result that the present predominance of the Whites, which has been supported, to a large extent by their numerical preponderance, is likely to be substantially diluted, and the American society of the future will be more multi-ethnic than in the past.

There seem to be significant similarities between the situation of Africano - Americans in the early decades of the 20th Century and that of Hispanics at the present. The latter, like Africano - Americans, are also an underprivileged minority, and it is a minority that is becoming increasingly conscious of being discriminated against and subjected to wrong and injustice by the White majority. In short, some of the conditions which had prompted a good number of Africano - Americans during the early decades of the 20th Century to look up to Islam as a means for achieving self-betterment and dignity are also present in the case of Hispanics. Although it is difficult for us at the moment to document this, yet our initial inquiries, indicate that Hispanics have begun to convert to Islam in significant numbers. Their present number, according to Barboza, is 5,000 (77). If this trend continues and gains momentum, it will presumably lead, in the course of the next century, to the emergence of a truly multi-religious and multicultural society in USA. In view of the above, it can be reasonably predicted that in the changed context, American Muslims

will be in a better position to reinforce their Islamic identity and contribute to the enrichment of the American society.

The effectiveness of American Muslims in playing the dual role of strengthening their identity and constructively participating, like all other citizens of USA, in the national enterprise of America, ceaseless striving for a better tomorrow, will largely depend on the extent to which American Muslims are able to close their ranks and create greater cohesiveness. Up until now there seems to have been a divide between the indigenous, largely Africano - American Muslims, and immigrant Muslims with the result that people of each of the above two categories have, to a large extent, lived and functioned in separate orbits. The immigrants themselves have not been a unified entity. Instead, they have remained divided among themselves along linguistic, ethnic, cultural and regional lines.

There are reasonable grounds to believe that, notwithstanding their state of affairs up until now, cohesiveness among American Muslims will increase, in the course of time. In our view, the factors which were responsible in the past for the prevalent state of affairs will, in all likelihood, increasingly lose their strength and effectiveness. In fact the operation of that process can already be noticed. In the melting pot of USA, the edge of ethnic, linguistic and cultural particularities of immigrant Muslims has already begun to be blunted. This is especially true in respect of a good number of immigrant Muslims who have entered the second or the third generation of their stay in America. There is nothing strange about this development as would be evident from the experience of the Catholic and Jewish immigrants from European countries, that by the third generation the narrower ethnic or national identities of immigrant Catholics and Jews were replaced by their broader religious identities. The Jews from different European countries who immigrated to USA ceased to be, in the third generation, German Jews, or Polish Jews, etc... They became simply

Jews. Likewise, Italian Catholics, or French Catholics, also became simply Catholics.

Thus, there are strong reasons to expect an enhanced cohesiveness among American Muslims in the future. Ironically enough, this development will, to a considerable degree, be a function of Americanization. The process already seems to be at work. For instance, we find that English has become the first language of the children and grand-children of those immigrants who were initially not too fluent in it. This development will be instrumental in solidifying Muslim ranks since it enables them to have effective communication, and hence better understanding with their brethren-in-faith of other ethnic backgrounds. Likewise, although a kind of gap between the immigrant and indigenous Muslims continues to exist, it is becoming reduced, and the trend is likely to continue. A factor contributing to this development is the increased upward mobility of the indigenous Muslims, including the Africano - American Muslims, especially during the last few decades. Likewise, Muslims of diverse backgrounds are coming closer because of the shared features of what is called the American way of life, right from such trivialities as Kentucky Fried Chicken and Dunkin Donuts to its more profound aspects. Likewise, a major factor which had kept the immigrant Muslims and the Africano - American Muslims apart in the past was the vague of sectarianism and heterodoxy among a section of Africano - Americans. As we know, a great deal of change has already taken place in this regard which has demolished some of the barriers between the two groups, and interaction and co-operation have been steadily on the increase.

It also seems pertinent to highlight some of the external factors that are affecting the attitudes of Muslims in USA. Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and the subsequent hostage-taking of US consular staff, both print and electronic media in USA have focused on the phenomenon of militant Islam. The stance of the media towards

Muslims and the policies pursued by USA and the governments of other Western nations have had a significant impact on the Muslims living in all Western countries, including USA. The constant denomination of Islam as a violence-prone religion and the ceaseless stereotyping of Muslims virtually as a bunch of blood-thirsty terrorists have developed in a section of Americans an irrational hatred and contempt for Islam and Muslims. This has occasionally led (such as during the Gulf War, or more recently, after the blow up of the Federal Government's building in Oklahoma), to violent attacks on mosques and Islamic Centers and on stores owned by Muslims, let alone to ominous threats that Muslims occasionally receive from extremists. All this seems to have had an adverse effect on the outward expansion of Islam in USA which has apparently slowed down for the moment. It is understandable that many of those who would think of converting to Islam would feel hesitant to do so in view of the possible consequence that they might be stigmatized by their friends and neighbors.

However, that is one aspect of the impact. It is also important to take note of the Muslim perceptions of Western policies, and the effect they have had on their attitudes. The Western military intervention in the Gulf and the Western posture on a host of problems from the Rushdi affair to the Bosnian tragedy to the brutal murder of Chechenya, let alone the unreserved support of Israel, "right or wrong", have been perceived by a large number of American Muslims as indicators of deeply-rooted Western feelings of antagonism towards Islam and Muslims. This has created in many Muslims a siege mentality with the result that they are constantly haunted by the phantom of Western hostility. This extraneous factor supplements the factors mentioned earlier and is contributing to the inner cohesiveness among the diverse Muslim elements in USA.

Thus, there are many portents betokening a more potent role for the US Muslims in the future. It goes without saying that like the rest of

American Muslims, Africano - American Muslims are likely to have a greater opportunity than ever before to affect the course of events in USA.

How far are American Muslims, especially Africano - American Muslims, equipped to avail of the opportunities that are likely to open up in the future ? What kind of life will they live in USA and what kind of contribution will they make to American life and culture ?

In order to answer these questions it would be necessary to examine the institutions which American Muslims have established so far and to examine their efficacy. The most important institutions, first of all, are the large number of mosques-Islamic centers that are spread all across USA. These not only provide a place to hold congregational prayers but also a social center for the Muslims living in a city or neighborhood. Above all, these mosques-Islamic centers are instrumental in holding public lectures as well as classes for instruction in Islam, especially in holding Sunday schools. In addition to these, we also find a growing number of Muslim schools which have been established to provide a more substantial Islamic education to Muslim children alongside general education. What is more, these schools attempt to impart education in an Islamic atmosphere, and with an accent on developing Islamic attitude and character in the younger generation.

The activities of the mosques-Islamic centers are mainly aimed at creating a better understanding of Islam, chiefly among the members of the Muslim community, and reinforcing their loyalty to it. A major objective of these activities is to transmit Islamic knowledge and norms to Muslim children and youngsters so as to enable them to live in America as good, practicing Muslims. Special camps are also held for this purpose by these mosques-Islamic centers, or the local Muslim associations which oversee the mosques. These institutions seem to be only peripherally concerned with improving the common American's awareness of Islam. Whatever serious activity takes place in this field

consists of da'wah work among people serving terms of imprisonment. This is a continuation of the activity in which the Nation of Islam were known to have engaged with great success.

New Islamic institutions on the national level have also been established. The Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA) established in the early 1950's has almost petered out and has been replaced by several other national organizations. Likewise, although the Muslim Students Association (MSA) has maintained its existence, it is now much less active than it used to be about two decades ago. The most important of these organizations is the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), which has its headquarters in Plainfield, Indiana. Another organization on the national level is the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) which maintained itself as an almost exclusively Indo-Pakistani group and which has largely been inspired by the ideology of Jama'at-i Islami. Both these organizations, but especially ISNA, have been concerned with building institutions that would support and strengthen the foundations of Muslim identity in USA. ISNA had made a very promising start, but for quite some years it had showed much less rigor in its activities than in the late 1970's and early 1980's. However, of late, it has begun to show signs of fresh energy under the inspiring leadership of its new Secretary General, Dr. S. M. Sayeed.

It is noteworthy that there is a serious lacuna in the efforts of US Muslims in so far as they have failed to establish academic institutions that would give rise to an indigenous Islamic scholarly tradition. Hence, a majority of scholars who are working as imams of mosques, directors of Islamic Centers, or are imparting instruction in Islam, or are lecturing on Islam, or making use of the media to improve the American awareness of Islam are mostly brought from overseas. This applies, with hardly any exceptions, to immigrant Muslims. This seems an odd arrangement. For these scholars, who have certainly contributed to the cause of Islam, are not quite equipped to effectively

operate in a country such as America. More often than not, they lack the requisite proficiency in English. Also, their educational background is not quite adequate for communicating with Muslim children and youngsters who were born and brought up in USA, let alone for becoming effective spokesmen of Islam. Moreover, many of them come with their baggage from their home country, often a narrow, sectarian outlook, and a fairly rigid attitude towards the detailed questions of law. Doubtlessly, these religious teachers from overseas have so far made a very important contribution to the cause of Islam in USA. Despite due deference for this role, the time has come for American Muslims to develop resources within USA to cater to the American Muslim community's need for religious leadership.

So far as Africano - American Muslims are concerned, to our knowledge they have not brought imams and religious leaders from abroad, although occasionally they have benefited from the foreigners who are locally available. Instead, they have appointed local persons from among themselves to look after the religious needs of the community. Some of these imams have shown their potential and have conclusively proved their competence as leaders of men. The academic grounding of a majority of them in Islamics, and schooling as such, however, is not very sound. On the other hand, American Muslims require not only a large number of scholars and thinkers of average caliber in Islamics ; they rather need outstanding scholars and thinkers who would combine Islamic erudition with intellectual brilliance, who would be capable of spelling out the Islamic world-view in an idiom comprehensible to their fellow-citizens, and of articulating the Islamic vision of life in terms that would be relevant for, and meaningful in, a religiously pluralistic society such as USA. In short, one of the most urgent tasks facing American Muslims is to produce Islamic scholarship of the highest order.

It may be recalled that around the 1950's and in subsequent years the Muslim world provided America with three of the most

outstanding scholars of this century, Fazular-Rahman from Pakistan (d. 1988), Ismail al-Faruqi from Palestine (d. 1986), and Seyyed Hossein Nasr from Iran. It is time that Islamic scholars of that stature begin to emerge from the ranks of American Muslims.

Africano - Americans have for long been living under conditions which had prevented them from bringing out their full scholastic potential. But it is also well known that their forefathers in Africa had made rich scholastic contributions, including contributions to Islamic thought and learning. In recent decades, Africano - Americans have begun to make their presence felt in the academia, and their latent Academic talents have begun to flower. The time seems ripe for dedicated Africano - American Muslims to gird up their loins to contributing their share to the enrichment of contemporary Islamic thought.

Africano - Americans have lived long in a country that can justifiably boast of being the most advanced in science and technology and of being in the vanguard of contemporary human thought and civilization. Those Africano - American Muslims who might be able combine their awareness of contemporary learning with a profound knowledge of Islam, and add to that their vivid awareness of both the sordid and the positive aspects of contemporary civilization owing to their presence in America for several centuries, would be eminently qualified to take up the challenge to enrich the intellectual tradition of Islam.

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CHAPTER V

Islam in the Caribbean

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1- Introduction

The Caribbean is the insular region between North and South America, made up of a multitude of islands. Culturally, it includes continental territories in Central and South America, the language of which is neither Spanish nor Portuguese. Its total land area is 726,385 square km, including 492,230 square km continental and 234,155 square km insular.

The story of Islam in the Caribbean started certainly before its conquest by Spain on the turn of the 16th Century. There is strong evidence that Andalucian Muslims visited the Caribbean as reported by Al-Shareef Al-Idrissi in the 12th Century. Furthermore, there is certain evidence in the Region of visits from the Muslim kingdoms of West Africa.

Spanish explorers, including Columbus, were led by Andalucian Muslim mariners who knew better the high seas. Some of the explorers were Moriscos, i.e., secret Muslims from Spain. Also, Andalucian Muslim immigrants of Rabat and Sale (Morocco) led the fight against Spanish and Portuguese ships in the Atlantic Ocean down to the Caribbean islands.

However, the formation of the resent Muslim communities of the Caribbean can be traced to three main consecutive waves of immigration: European; African; and Asiatic.

Muslim European immigration to the Caribbean started with Columbus voyage which coincided in 1492 with the fall of Granada to Christian Spanish forces. Several years later, Cardinal Cisneros, head of the Spanish Catholic Church, forced the Catholic religion on the millions of Muslims of Spain. In the 16th Century, thousands of these so-called Moriscos emigrated to America, including the Caribbean, with Spanish colonial armies. They declared in the New World their Islamic faith, and were subjected to the Spanish Inquisition in the Caribbean just as in Spain. Among these Moriscos were Rodrigo Lope, the colleague of Columbus. No traces remain of this first wave in the composition of the present Muslim Community.

As soon as this first wave of Muslim immigration died out in blood and tears, a new wave started, this time from Africa, in no less dramatic circumstances. European powers, after destroying the Carab and Arawak populations of the Caribbean, started enslaving free Africans to make up for the manpower shortage in these new colonies.

This African population movement started in the 16th Century and lasted until the 19th Century. A great number of these Africans were Muslim. They tried to keep their faith by all means, including sometimes armed struggle, such as the Muslim revolt led by Makendal in 1758 in Haiti against the French. This Muslim leader was burnt alive by French Colonial forces after his defeat. Due to this ferocious persecution of Muslims, including destruction of the family unit, Islam was on the verge of disappearing among the Blacks of the Caribbean. However, things took later an altogether unexpected turn, and the Africans began en masse a return to Islam.

The third wave emerged from Asia in 1830. Indeed, the British and the Dutch replaced slavery by forced emigration from India and Java for "indentured labor", a barely disguised form of slavery. Islam

remained firmly entrenched among the descendants of these immigrants, especially in the Guyanas and Trinidad.

This author has been in close contact with the Muslim communities of the Caribbean, and much of the information presented here is first hand. He visited the area four times as shown in Table 1.1.

The first visit, in the period 6-18/12/1973, was in a fact-finding tour for the Muslim World League (Mecca, Saudi Arabia) to the Muslims of the American Continent. The author visited in this period Puerto Rico, Curacao, Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam. He met with the leaders of Muslim communities in all these countries. In Trinidad, he brought back harmony to the two main organizations, ASJA and the IMG. In Guyana, he tried to heal the split in the then main Muslim organization, the USA.

The second visit, in the period 10-16/8/1987, was an official one representing the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the governments of Surinam, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tabago. He started with Surinam where he met many leaders of the Muslim Community, such as Dr. Isaac Jamaluddin and Mr. Lall Mohammed, as well as the President of the Republic, Mr. Fred Ramadat Misier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Henk Heidweiler. He went by road and boat from Paramaribo (capital of Surinam) to Georgetown (capital of Guyana), meeting with the Muslim communities on the way. In Guyana, he met with the leaders of the Muslims, including the late Haji AbdulRahman, President of USIA. He was also received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Hugh Desmond Hoyte, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Rashleigh Jackson, the Vice-President, Dr. Mohammed Shahabudeen (a Muslim) and the Prime Minister, Mr. Hamilton (Mohamed Blial) Green (a Muslim revert). In Trinidad, he met with the Muslim leaders, including Mawlana Wafi Mohamed, with the President of the Republic, Mr. Noor Hassanali (a Muslim) and the Foreign Minister, Mr. Basdeo Panday.

The third visit, in the period 27/7-12/811991, took this author to Trinidad on the invitation of the International Islamic University, Islamabad (Pakistan) to act as a resource person for a "Leadership Training Course" to the Muslim leaders of the Caribbean, organized in collaboration with the "Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America" (IMG). The course took place in the Islamic Center at Kelly Village (Caroni). There were 28 students, from Grenada, Belize, Tobago, Jamaica, Dominica and Barbados. Without moving around, this gave this author a bird's view on Islam in the Caribbean.

The fourth visit, in the period 7-24/1/1995, took this author to Guyana and Barbados. In Guyana he gave classes in the Guyana Islamic Institute in Meten Meer Zorg (Demerara) and met leaders of the Muslim Community in Guyana's tree counties: Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo. He also met leaders of the Muslim Community of Belize, Trinidad, St Vincent, Barbados, Bahamas, Surinam, Venezuela and Jamaica. He met also with the Prime Minister, Mr. Sam Hinds, the Leader of Opposition, President Hugh Desmond Hoyte (former President), and the Minister of Finances, Dr. Asghar Ally. He also visited Barbados and lectured in the Islamic Teaching Institute and met many Muslim leaders including Mohammed Deghia and Suleiman Bulbulia.

Table 1.1: Visits of Dr. Ali Kettani to the Muslim Communities of the Caribbean

Date	6-18/12/ 1973	10-16/8/ 1987	27/7-12/8/ 1991	7-24/1/ 1995
Puerto Rico	6-8/12	-	-	-
Curacao	10-11/12	-	-	-
Trinidad	11-14/12	14-16/8	27/7-12/8	
Guyana	14-16/12	12-14/8		7-22/1
Surinam	16-18/12	10-12/8		-
Barbados	-			22-24/1

The countries of the Caribbean could be divided as far as Islam is concerned into four categories:

The first category includes three countries: Surinam, Guyana, and Trinidad and Tobago, where Muslims are well organized and full-fledged partners in these states. This makes these three states the pillars of Islam in the Caribbean. Due to their importance, they will be treated each by a separate article written by experts from the concerned state.

The second category includes territories where Islam has emerged with dynamism in different provinces during the last twenty years and the number of Muslims, already substantial, is growing. These territories are: Jamaica, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Martinique, Barbados, Belize, the Netherland Antilles, Bahamas, Grenada, Guadelupe and French Guiana.

The third category includes territories where newly established converted communities are organized and formed their Islamic institutions at least in one location. These are: Dominica, St Lucia, St Vincent, Bermuda, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands and Mt Serrat.

The fourth category includes the other territories of the Caribbean where Muslims are in small numbers, and are not yet organized as far as is known to this author.

Table 1.2 gives a summary of the territories in the Caribbean and the Muslim presence. It shows that the Muslims numbered about 445,000 people, constituting 1.26% of the total population of 35,310,000 people.

The territories outside the first category are the subject of this article.

Table 1.2: Islam in the Caribbean in 1991

Territory	area in km ²	Total Population	Muslim Popul.	Muslim %	Capital
Trinidad Tobago	5,128	1,280,000	154,000	12%	Pt-of-Spain
Guyana	215,000	751,000	113,000	15%	Georgetown
Surinam	163,265	420,000	147,000	35%	Paramaribo
Jamaica	10,962	2,500,000	4,500	0.2%	Kingston
Puerto Rico	8,897	3,557,000	4,500	0.1%	San Juan
US Virgin Islands	345	103,000	3,000	2.9%	Charlotte A
Martinique *	1,110	363,000	3,000	0.8%	Ft-de-France
Barbados	430	262,000	2,600	1.0%	Bridgetown
Belize	22,965	200,000	2,500	1.3%	Belize City
N. Antilles	836	193,000	2,000	1.0%	Willemstad
Bahamas	13,938	260,000	1,500	0.6%	Nassau
Grenada	311	91,000	1,200	1.3%	St George's
Guadeloupe	1,779	382,000	1,000	0.3%	Basse Terre
F. Guiana	91,000	117,000	1,000	1.0%	Cayenne
Dominica	751	109,000	350	0.3%	Roseau
St Lucia	616	151,000	300	0.2%	Castries
St Vincent	388	116,000	250	0.2%	Kingstown
Bermuda	54	61,000	200	0.3%	Hamilton
Antigua	442	87,000	100	0.1%	St Johns
Barbuda					
Brit. Virgin Islands	152	17,000	100	0.6%	Tortola
Mt Serrat	83	13,000	100	0.8%	Plymouth
Others	187,933	24,276,000	2,700	0.01%	
Total	726 385	35 309 000	444 900	1.26%	-

2- Islam in Jamaica

Jamaica is one of the largest islands of the Caribbean, located at 128 km South of Cuba, 160 km East of Hispaniola, and 1,000 km South of Florida. It is a beautiful island of treecovered mountains reaching up to 2,240 meters above sea level, and much running water. Its area is 10,962 km, with a length of about 230 km and an average width of about 50 km.

The population of Jamaica was 2,500,000 in 1991 (1,443,000 in 1951). This population increases only slowly, as there is a strong emigration to the US, Canada and the UK. Of these, most people are of African origin, 3% Indians, 3% Europeans, 1% Chinese and 2% miscellaneous. About the fourth of the population lives in Kingston,

the capital. The second largest city of the island is Spanish Town (90,000 inhabitants), followed by Montego Bay (70,000 inhabitants).

When Columbus arrived to Jamaica in 1494 CE, it was inhabited by native Arawaks, who were eventually exterminated by the Spanish. The latter remained in the island until 1655 CE, when they were expended by the British who colonized the island. These brought in enslaved Africans for the plantations. Their descendants form now the bulk of the Jamaican population. Jamaica received local autonomy in 1953 CE and full independence in 1962 CE. It is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The language of the country is English and the population speaks a Jamaican Creole version.

Jamaica is the world largest producer of bauxite. It also produces sugar, bananas, oranges, tobacco, and other agricultural products. It has also an important tourism industry as it is visited yearly by about one million tourists.

The headquarters of the University of West Indies is in Saint Andrew in Jamaica. This university has also branches in Trinidad and in Barbados.

Most Jamaicans are now Christians, mostly Protestants of different denominations, and the country is dotted with churches all across. There are also about 200,000 Catholics and less than 1,000 Jews.

The number of Muslims in Jamaica was around 4,500 in 1991, or 0.18% of the total population. The majority of Muslims are of Indian origin (about 2,500) but an increasing number are returnees to Islam of African origin (about 2,000 now).

The first documented evidence of Islam in Jamaica, is with the enslaved African brought in by the British in the 16th and 17th centuries to work in the sugar cane plantations. They were mainly Muslims from West Africa from such tribes as Mandigos, Fulas, Ashantis and Coromantis. The conditions of slavery were so harsh, and Islam was so much feared, that these first Muslims had their names changed by their masters, their families broken, their children

taken away from them, their marriages unrecognized, that Islam could not survive in their midst after the first generations. They were forcibly christianized.

In 1833, Robert R. Madden, one of the magistrates assigned to carry out a scheme of "apprenticeship" among enslaved Africans reported: "they could all read and write Arabic, and one of them showed me a Quran written from memory. One of them, Benjamin Cochrane, a free Negro who practiced with no little success as a doctor in Kingston, was in the habit of coming to me on Sundays to give me information about the medical plants and popular medicine of the country, a more respectable and intelligent person I do not know... His story is that of hundreds in Jamaica... Cochrane says that his father was a chief in Mandingo country".

In 1838, a Muslim slave in Jamaica, Benjamin Lawton, was able to complete writing the whole of the Quran from memory. Edward Donlan (Abu-Bakr as Siddiq) hailed from Timbuctu and was proud to be of a Shareef family (descendant of the Prophet). Robert Pearn (Mohammed Kaba) was a secret Muslim, just like thousands of other enslaved Africans in Jamaica.

Slavery was abolished in the mid-19th Century. As many former slaves refused to work under the former inhuman conditions, the British brought in indentured laborers from India and some from China. A number of Indians were Muslims, the rest were Hindus. Thus, Islam had a second chance in Jamaica. However, the regulations of indentureship were only slightly less cruel than slavery. Muslims (and Hindus) were harshly lured into abandoning their faith and accepting Christianity, as only those who became Christian could benefit from better treatment, education and health care.

Nevertheless, those who remained Muslim used to gather secretly for congregational prayers. Thus, they kept Islamic presence in the island in a very low profile until the 1950's, when, in all appearance, Islam was nonexistent to the observer.

The East Indian Community witnessed an Islamic revival when Trinidadian Muslim students came to study in Jamaica in the 1950's. Among them was Jamshid Adam, later a known medical doctor in Trinidad. The students found many unorganized East Indian Muslims in Jamaica who had barely any knowledge of Islam. In 1957, they helped them organize in Spanish Town (St Catherine County) the "Islamic Association of Jamaica". The first president was Hadj Mohammed Khan, who remained so until his death in September 17, 1973.

Meanwhile, many Jamaicans of African origin rediscovered Islam in England, the US and Canada. Those who returned to Jamaica formed a branch of "The Nation of Islam in North America" led by the late Elijah Mohammed of Chicago (Illinois), named the "World Community of Islam". They established their center in Kingston, the capital, and called it the "Islamic Center of Jamaica".

On 6/9/1981, the two groups recognized the need to unite in a umbrella organization for all Jamaican Muslims. Thus, the "Islamic Council of Jamaica" (ICOJ) was born bringing all Muslims together, whether of African or Indian origin, in one single community. The driving force behind this unity were Abdus-Samad, who just returned back from the US, Talib Millan, Mustafa Mohammed, and Naim Khan who had extensive experience in Muslim organization. The constitution of ICJ states that the Council:

- 1) is the sole representative of the Muslims of Jamaica;
- 2) coordinates the activities of all mosques and Muslim communities of Jamaica;
- 3) mediates any disputes between groups or individuals, whenever needed to do so;
- 4) strengthens brotherhood and deepens relations between all Muslims; and
- 5) organizes Muslims and establishes Islamic institutions.

Each Muslim community in Jamaica is represented in ICOJ by two representatives. The first President of the ICOJ was Abdullah Hakim Quick of the US, followed in 1983 by Faruk Abdul-Majeed. The present ICOJ President is Mustafa Mohammed. The present Imam and religious adviser to ICOJ is Sheikkh Musa Tijani, a Nigerian scholar who arrived to Jamaica in 1969. The headquarters of ICOJ are in Kingston.

ICOJ makes a great effort in bringing back the lost Muslims to Islam and in presenting Islam to non-Muslims, through weekly classes, youth camps, study groups, etc... ICOJ also publishes "Al-Nur", a monthly newsletter.

By 1994, there were six organized Muslim communities in Jamaica, all members of ICOJ. Table 2.1 gives the names of their mosques, towns, and counties.

The Central Mosque serves the Muslim community of Kingston and is the ICOJ headquarters. It consists of a house bought in 1987 with donations from Jamaica, the Caribbean and the Muslim World. The house includes four rooms, a hall, a kitchen, and two bathrooms. The hall is used as prayer room, two rooms for ladies, one room as a class and the fourth as an office. About fifty people show up in Friday prayers in the mosque. About 15 persons take classes at any time at the hand of Imam Tijani.

Table 2.1 The Mosque of Jamaica

Name of the Mosque	Town	Country	Year Founded
Central Mosque	Kingston	Kingston	1987
Masjid Al-Rahman	Spanish Town	St-Catherine	1957
Masjid Hussain	Three Miles River	Westmoreland	1990
Masjid Al-Haqq	Portland Cottage	Glarendon	1992
Masjid An-Nur	Port-Maria	St. Mary	1990
Masjid As-Sabr	Albany	St. Mary	1990

Masjid ar-Rahman is in Spanish Town at about 30 km from the Central Mosque. It was established by the Khans in 1957 to serve the Muslim community of Spanish Town. After the death of the founder Hajji Mohammed Khan, his son-in-law, a newly arrived Moroccan immigrant, led the prayers, whereas Lyndon Khan became President of the association. However, as the Khan family disintegrated, new revert saved the Mosque in the 1970's. The Mosque can accommodate about 75 people. It has two teachers: Talib-ud-Din and Dawud Abdul-Sami. Muslims in this town have difficulties assisting in the Friday prayers, as most are workers. This Mosque is busiest on Saturdays and Sundays when classes are held regularly.

Masjid Hussain was rebuilt in 1990, replacing an older structure, in the County of Westmoreland near the sea, in the western part of Jamaica, at about 200 km by road from Kingston.

Masjid Al-Haqq was established in 1992 in Clarendon County, at Portland Cottage. It serves an important local Muslim community.

Masjid Al-Nur was first built in Port-Maria with bamboo canes near the shoreline, but it has been destroyed by Hurricane Gilbert. It was then rebuilt with wood in 1990 at a nearby location away from the sea-shore. This Mosque includes a prayer hall and a library. The Imam is Mustafa Muwakkil.

Masjid as-Sabr is located at Albany on the Northern shore, at about 60 km from Kingston and twenty minutes drive from Masjid an-Nur. This Mosque is in a wooden area, away from houses. It was an old bamboo structure, but the Muslim Community rebuilt it with bricks in 1990. It has an area of 166.5 m. The Imam is Sulayman Abdul-Haqq, and the President of the Association is Omar Abdul-Salim.

The latest Muslim Community was organized in Montego Bay in 1994. They established a temporary Mosque for their meetings and prayers.

ICOJ has hosted many regional Islamic conferences, such as the "First Caribbean Islamic Conference" held by the "International

"Islamic Federation of Student Organizations" (IIFSO) in Kingston on March 31 to April 4, 1988.

The Jamaican Muslim Community is young and increasing fast in numbers and knowledge. The growth is mostly through conversion, and some Jamaicans, such as Dr. Bilal Philipps, became reknown Muslim scholars. Some rose to high positions such as the Director of the International Bank of Jamaica. But in general, the Jamaican Muslim Community is financially poor. Nevertheless, Islam in Jamaica has a bright future.

3- Islam in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is a Caribbean state in association with the USA, at 80 km to the East of Hispaniola. It is made up of a main island and a multitude of smaller ones. The main island is mountainous (up to 1,200 m above sea level) and covered with vegetation.

Puerto Rico has an area of 8,897 km and a total population of 3,557,000 people in 1991, and 2,245,000 in 1951. The slow rate of increase is due to continuous emigration to the USA to the point that there are as many Puerto Ricans in there as in their island. The capital is San Juan (one million people), the other main cities are Ponce (300,000), Arecibo (150,000), Mayaguez, and Caguas. The official languages are Spanish and English.

Columbus visited Puerto Rico during his second voyage. In 1508, the Spanish conquered it. They exterminated its original Caribs and emigrated to the island in great numbers. Then, they brought in enslaved Africans. In 1898, the USA defeated Spain and conquered Puerto Rico, which remained an American colony until 1952 when it received its local autonomy. In a popular plebiscite, the population chose to remain associated with the USA.

The present population of Puerto Rico is constituted with Whites and Blacks with a Mestizo majority. About 80% of them are Catholics

and the rest are mostly Protestants. There are about 4,000 Muslims (0.1% of the total population) who hail mostly from Palestine. Some are from Lebanon and an increasing small number are local revert. Most Muslims are Puerto Rican (US) citizens.

The economy of Puerto Rico is based on agriculture, producing sugar cane, tobacco and bananas. The country has also an important agro-industry producing sugar and other agro products. The third important activity of Puerto Rico is tourism as it receives more than one million tourists yearly. The Northern coast of the island is the most developed.

Islam reached Puerto Rico with the Moriscos who came with the Spanish in the 16th Century. These were secret Muslims who were eventually forced into Christianity without leaving any traces today.

Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, Islam arrived with the enslaved Africans. But conditions of slavery, as elsewhere in the American continent, led to the disappearance of Islam among their descendants today.

But both immigrations left a diffused memory in the population giving it a good attitude towards Islam. In fact, as there is a great movement of people between the USA and Puerto Rico, events in the former influence the latter greatly including in the field of Islam. Indeed, many Puerto Ricans accepted Islam in the USA along with other Hispanics. These have organized themselves in a "Hispanic Muslim Community" across the USA. The chapter of this association in New York City is mostly Puerto Rican. This event is bound to lead to the creation of native Puerto Rican Muslim revert communities, as happened elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Today, most Puerto Rican Muslims come from a more recent immigration. These are in their majority Palestinians who started arriving through the USA to Puerto Rico after World War II, and mostly in the 1960's and 1970's. They work as traders, some have prosperous shops, others are ambulants. There are also several Muslim

teachers and students at the half dozen Puerto Rican universities. The majority of the Muslims live in Greater San Juan, but many settled in such towns as Arecibo, Ponce, and Vega Baja.

In 1967, the Palestinian Community established the "Arab Cultural Club" in Rio Piedras, a suburb of San Juan where most of them live. But this first organization was a national one and gave no religious services. They bought two large apartments which they connected to be used as the seat of the "Club". In 1971, they started Arabic classes to Muslim children in this "Club". However, this activity stopped in 1972, and the "Club" became practically empty with no special usefulness.

When this author visited Puerto Rico in 6-8/12/1973, he found its Muslim Community badly organized. The "Arab Cultural Club" existed and had an Executive Committee whose members were all Muslim Palestinians, but it was dormant and had no major activities. However, the Muslims of Rio Piedras used their own homes for religious meetings, led by a Palestinian Imam, Abu-Ali Al-Akhras. This author met at that time with the Muslim youth and urged them to organize in a Muslim Community instead of an Arab Club, and transform the "Club" into an "Islamic Center", as all its members are Muslim. There were some active Muslims in Rio Piedras such as Ali Abdul-Rahman Hussein, a businessman hailing from Deir Yassin in Palestine, Mohammed Al-Akhras, Fareed Al-Asmar, and many others.

Years later, the Puerto Rican Muslim Community established in Rio Piedras "El Centro Islamico en Puerto Rico" (CIPR) and organized itself on an Islamic basis, independently of its members' national origin. The moving force behind this change was Shaikh Suleiman, a Palestinian, who acted for many years as Imam and was later elected as treasurer of CIPR. They bought a three-stores house in Rio Piedras, the top floor is used as a mosque; the second floor is made up of rented apartments; and the ground floor is used for rented

business facilities; the income helps in the expenditures of CIPR. The building is known as the San Juan Mosque.

In 1991, the CIPR office bearers were Dr. Shukri El-Khatib, a Palestinian professor of biochemistry and nutrition at the Puerto Rico Medical School, (president); Shalkh Suleiman, one of the CIPR founders (treasurer); Zaid Abdel-Rahim (secretary), who is fluent in Spanish, English and Arabic; and Shaikh Ibrahim Ismael (full-time Imam), a Palestinian. He is paid by the local contributions of the Muslim Community.

Friday prayers are held regularly in the San Juan Mosque. More than one hundred faithful are usually present. The Imam conducts classes for children in the Mosque on Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm and on Sundays from 9 am to noon. The Imam also visits homes to urge Muslims to learn more about Islam. He has been very effective in organizing the Muslims of Puerto Rico outside San Juan.

CIPR has a very effective ladies chapter involving Muslim women in Islamic activities. Its chairwoman is Ms Rabah Khalil. There are also Islamic radio programs, and during the month of Ramadhan, the call to prayer is sounded on the radio at sunset. On the other hand, CIPR is planning to start a Muslim cemetery.

Palestinian Muslims settled also in Arecibo, at about 100 km to the West of San Juan, on the coast. In the 1960's, they opened an "Arab Club" in a rented apartment, which did not last long. When this author visited Arecibo on 6-7/12/1974, there was few Muslims, including two Marroccans, but no Islamic organization or institution. In May 1989, the Arecibo Mosque was opened on the top floor of a building rent-free. The Arecibo Muslim Community organized itself around this Mosque. The Friday prayers are conducted regularly, and classes on Islam and Arabic are given to children and adults on Tuesdays evenings from 8 pm to 10 pm.

Ponce, near the Southern shore at about 100 km South of Arecibo and 150 km South-West of San Juan, has also an organized Muslim

Community. They rented a house and used it as an Islamic Center. Friday prayers are held regularly, and classes to children and adults are held on Wednesdays evening from 8 pm to 10 pm.

The fourth organized Muslim Community in Puerto Rico is that of Vega Baja, a small town halfway between San Juan and Ponce. In December 1989, the Community rented a building and used it as its Islamic Center. Friday prayers are held now regularly and classes are given to children and adults on Mondays evenings from 8 pm to 10 pm.

All these four Muslim communities are organized within CIPR, thus acting as chapters of the main organization in Rio Piedras. These communities are witnessing an Islamic revival. The young, especially ladies, are very active, and hundreds of Puerto Ricans are converting to Islam. Thus, the Puerto Rican Muslim Community is increasing in numbers and activity.

4- Islam in the US Virgin Islands

The US Virgin Islands are a group of 68 volcanic islands located at the East of Puerto Rico and at the West of British Virgin Islands. The highest peak is in St Thomas, at 474 meters above sea level. Only ten islands are inhabited, of these three are the home of most of the population: St Thomas and St John in the North, and at a slightly larger distance, St Croix in the South. The total area of the territory is 345 km and its total population was in 1991 about 103,000 inhabitants, and 27,000 in 1951. Thus, the population of the territory has increased dramatically due to high immigration. The population distribution, number of Muslims and area per island are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Muslims in the US Virgin Islands in 1991

Island	area km	Population	Nber of Muslims	% of Muslims
St Croix	205	50,000	1,800	3.6%
St Thomas	84	50,000	1,000	2.0%
St John	53	3,000	200	6.7%
Total	345	103,000	3,000	2.9%

Columbus visited these islands during his second voyage in 1493 and named them in honor of St Ursula and her virgin companions. In 1672, Denmark took over St Thomas and brought in enslaved Africans the next year, replacing the original Arawaks which were being exterminated. In 1717, Denmark settled St John, but in 1733, the Africans revolted in both islands against the slavery horrible conditions. That year, Denmark bought St Croix from France, thus bringing the three islands under Danish control. Slavery was abolished only in 1848.

In 1917, the United States bought these islands from Denmark. The territory is now run by a legislative assembly of 15 elected members, and is represented since 1972 in the US House of Representatives by an elected delegate. Its capital is Charlotte Amalie in the St Thomas Island. The official language is English. It is also the most spoken language among the people.

About 75% of the population of the US Virgin Islands are of African origin. Most of the population is Christian belonging to a multitude of denominations. In 1991, there were about 3,000 Muslims (3% of the total population), including 1,800 in St Croix, 1,000 in St Thomas, and 200 in St John.

Traditionally, the economy of the US Virgin Islands is based on agriculture, namely sugarcane and husbandry. Bauxite is also mined. But tourism is the main industry of the Islands ensuring its prosperity,

as more than one million people visit them annually. There is an Air Base in St Croix, and a Submarine Base in St Thomas.

Islam arrived to the US Virgin Islands through two streams, both starting around the 1960's. The first is the immigration of Muslim tradesmen, mostly Palestinians and Lebanese, from the US. The second stream is made up by citizens of African origin who returned to Islam, mostly in the US before returning to these islands. At present most Muslims of St Thomas are of Arab, Pakistani and African origin, in this order of numerical importance, whereas most Muslims of St Croix are of Indian and African origin. The Muslims are organized in St Croix and in St Thomas.

St Croix has a larger Muslim community than St Thomas. In the 1970's, they formed the "International Islamic Association of the Virgin Islands" (IIAVI), headed for a while by a local Muslim who works as a Housing Officer with the local Government. Other important persons of the Community are: Yahya Yusuf a Palestinian businessman, Jamal Greene, and Sheikh Mansour Thuneibat, a Palestinian taxi driver who acts as Imam of the Muslim Community.

IIAVI established a beautiful Mosque on a 8,000 m² which it owns. It has good facilities for prayers and community functions. The roof of this Mosque was blown up by Hurricane Hugo on 17/9/1989, and was later repaired. This hurricane damaged the dynamism of the St Croix Muslim Community, but it has recovered since then. Friday prayers and the daily five prayers are held regularly. Islamic classes are given to children and adults. Da'wah is given to Muslims and non Muslims by visiting their homes. IIAV also sponsors an Islamic 30 minutes weekly radio program conducted by the Imam. The Community plans to start a full-time Muslim Primary School.

In 1989, Imam Abdallah Yasin immigrated to St Croix from Newark (New Jersey, USA). He is an African American Muslim who received his Islamic training in Saudi Arabia. He established in Newark a Mosque called Baytul-Khaliq. His intention is to set up a

Muslim Community in St Croix, other than the existing one, by establishing a Mosque and homes around it, thus creating a Muslim neighborhood.

The St Thomas Muslim Community was organized through the effort of a Muslim pharmacist of Indian origin, Mirza Shakir Baig. He organized it as "Masjid an-Nur Muslim Community" (MNMC). The temporary mosque started in a top floor rented apartment. It was then moved to a rent-free building. With its rapid demographic growth, the St Thomas Muslim Community feels an urgent need for a properly built Islamic Center and Mosque. By the end of 1993, MNMC bought a piece of land to construct properly its Mosque.

The Imam of the St Thomas Mosque, Imam Khalid Nadir, a local returnee to Islam, keeps an active schedule, as the weekly Friday prayers are held regularly with about 20 Muslims taking part, as well as most of the daily prayers. On weekends, classes are held on Arabic and basics of Islam for more than 50 children, and separate classes are given to adults. A Libyan teacher, Fathi, resident on St Thomas, helps the Imam as a voluntary teacher. Other important leaders of the St. Thomas Muslim Community are Farid Abdul-Jabbar and Hassin Abraham (a Trinidadian).

The Muslim Community of the US Virgin Islands is growing fast. Its representatives are usually present in local and international Islamic conferences. They appeared first in the Islamic conferences held in Trinidad in 1977, and they were very effective in coordinating the Islamic da'wah in the Caribbean.

5- Islam in the Martinique

Martinique is a French territory having the status of an Overseas French Department since 1946. It is between Dominica in the North and St Lucia in the South. Its capital is Fort-de France. The area of Martinique is 1,110 km² and the total population was 363,000 people

in 1991, and 282,000 in 1951. This slow population growth is due to continuous emigration to France, Canada and the US.

Martinique is a volcanic island, with the Volcano Mont Pele in the North culminating at about 1,080 m above sea level. It erupted in 1902 and destroyed St Pierre, the former capital city, killing more than 40,000 people. It erupted again in 1929.

Martinique, originally called Madinina, was first visited by Columbus in 1502. The "French Compagnie des Iles d'Amérique" took over the island on 25/6/1635. In 1674, it became part of the French royal domain. First, the French cultivated cotton and tobacco. In 1650, they introduced sugarcane, and in 1723, coffee.

The original Arawaks and Caribs were exterminated and replaced by enslaved Africans whose numbers reached 60,000 in 1736. Slavery was abolished in 1848. The British attacked or conquered Martinique many times: in 1666, 1667, 1762-1763, 1793-1801 and 1809-1814. Martinique is the birthplace of Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon I.

In 1851, France started to bring indentured laborers to Martinique from its colonies in India. On 1/2/1861, it signed a convention with Britain to bring more workers from the British Indian territories to its Caribbean possessions. This Indian immigration lasted 32 years until 1883, bringing in a total of 25,509 Indians to Martinique. Of these, 11,077 Indians returned home after the expiration of their contracts, and 14,432 Indians remained in Martinique.

People of African origin form now the majority of the population. They are mostly Catholic and speak Creole. The official language is French. The economy of Martinique is based on agriculture (mainly sugar, coffee and bananas) and fishing.

Islam reached Martinique first with the enslaved Africans, but could not survive for the same reasons of inhuman conditions mentioned elsewhere.

The second wave of Muslim arrivals came from India, as about 14.5% of the indentured laborers were Muslims, or about 3,700 Muslims. Many returned home, but this cannot explain the fact that Islam did not survive among them today. Some horrible conditions decimated the entire Indian population, as of the 14,432 Indians who remained in Martinique, their descendants counted only 4,665 in 1900. If Indian Muslims returned and survived in the same proportions as the Hindus, they would be about 660 in Martinique in 1900. It is not clear what happened to them since then. The fact is that by 1950 no Muslim Indians were present in Martinique.

The third Muslim wave to Martinique came from Palestine, the first Palestinian being Mohammed Abdallah, from Bethlehem. He came to Martinique in 1926 and died in 1977. He was followed by others. Today, the most distinguished member of this community is Mansour Mohammed (born in 1938) who arrived from El-Bireh on 22/1/1962.

The fourth Muslim wave is Senegalese and Malian, reached Martinique in the 1970's. Both had a great influence in attracting a large number of Martiniquais to Islam. The first Martiniquais to revert to Islam is the family of M. Barik Serge Mahmoud (himself, his wife and three children) in 1975.

In 1993, there were about 3,000 Muslims in Martinique (about 0.8% of the total population), half of them were immigrants of different origins, including Senegal, Mali, Morocco, Syria, and Palestine, the others were local revertants.

The Arabs of Martinique, both Christians and Muslims, established in the 1960's a "Club Arabe" (Arab Club) which had no effect in preserving the Islamic culture nor in promoting the Arabic language. This "Club" is no more than a social gathering place as elsewhere in the American continent.

The first Islamic organization established in Martinique is due to the effort of a Malian Sarakole who hails from Kenieba, near Kayes, Imam Fode Ahmed Marega, now resident in Paris (France). Imam

Marega is also Moqaddem of the Qadiri Soufi Order. He established in 1974 in Paris "Le Lien Islamique Universel" (The Universal Islamic Link, LIV), with himself as President.

Imam Marega arrived in Martinique for the first time in November 1974, when he remained three months calling the people of Martinique to Islam. He succeeded in converting the first family mentioned above, followed by many others. He returned to Martinique in May 1977, and started immediately gathering Muslims. He started his public prayers on the sea-shore. He then started radio emissions on Islam, talked on television, published articles, gave lectures, visited homes, etc...

In 1978, Imam Marega started congregational prayers in his own home, which became a real Islamic Center where Friday prayers are held regularly, Islamic holidays are celebrated and courses are given.

On February 1981, Imam Marega established an Islamic association under the 1901 Law named: "Le Lien Islamique Universel de Fort-de-France", (LIUFF). The first Executive Committee of this association was made up by Imam Marega (president), Yacoub Edouard Fortune (Martiniquais, secretary), Mansour Mohammed (Palestinian, treasurer), and six other members. When Imam Marega left Martinique back to Paris, the head of the organization became Ali Charpentier Titty, a Martiniquais.

Now LIUFF is mostly made up of local revert. They have their own Islamic Center in an apartment in Fort-de-France. Friday prayers are held regularly in this center, and are attended by at least ten persons. Classes are also given on Islam to interested persons. LIUFF plans to build its Mosque and Islamic Center in Fort-de-France.

The method of work of LIUFF, based on the universality of the Islamic Message, concentrates on answering the questions that might be posed by people about Islam; explaining Islam as it is; and teaching

Islamic "akhlaq" (morals). LIUFF has more than 200 members in Martinique, half of them local revert (converts).

In 1979, the Islamic Community established by Imam Marega rented an apartment as a "Centre Culturel Islamique de la Martinique" (Islamic Cultural Center of Martinique, CCIM) and got in touch with the World Muslim League in Saudi Arabia for the support of teachers.

In 1984, divisions appeared in the Community with those who were not happy with the Soufi inclination of LIUFF, separating themselves under CCIM. CCIM rented a two top-floor facility in a building in the center of Fort-de-France, and converting it into an Islamic Center. In 1990, the CCIM President was Mohammed Yasin Anglionin, a local Martiniquais, whose two sons studied in the Islamic University of Medina (Saudi Arabia), the Vice-President was a Senegalese, the Secretary a Moroccan, the Assistant Secretary a Malian, the Treasurer, Mansour Nasser, a Palestinian, and the Assistant Treasurer a Martiniquais.

Most Muslims of Martinique are CCIM members. CCIM has also a women's chapter headed by Amina Mansour. CCIM's Imam, originally from Senegal, Sheikh M'backe, assigned to them by Dar-ul-Ifta of Saudi Arabia. More than 25 persons usually attend Friday prayers. Shaikh M'backe is very active, leading congregational prayers, including weekly Friday prayers, giving daily lectures on Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims, adults and children, and conducting Arabic classes.

Efforts are made to unify the two associations, which anyway cooperate with each other. Martinique has sent several Muslim youths for Islamic studies abroad, especially in the Islamic University of Medina. However, there is no properly built mosque in Martinique, no Muslim cemetery, and no full-time Islamic School. Nevertheless, the future of Islam in Martinique seems as good as elsewhere in the Caribbean.

6- Islam in Barbados

Barbados is located at the extreme east of the chain of smaller islands of the Caribbean Sea, North-East of Trinidad. It has a triangular shape, with a total area of 430 km, 34 km in length and 22 km in width. The island includes some hills (highest at about 336 m above sea level) and streams.

Barbados had a total population of 216,000 inhabitants in 1951., and 262,000 in 1991. The small demographic increase is mainly due to emigration to the USA, Canada and the UK. The capital of Barbados, Bridgetown, is the home of about half of its population.

Barbados was conquered by Spain in 1519, and named by the Portuguese after the beard-like vines they observed on its trees. It was inhabited by Caribs who were exterminated by the Spanish, so much so that when the British conquered it in 1627, it was practically empty of people. By 1629, there were 1,700 Britishers in Barbados. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the British brought in enslaved Africans for their plantations. When slavery was abolished in 1834, the British introduced indentured labor, mostly from India.

Barbados remained a British colony from 1885 until 1958, when it became member of the short-lived West Indian Federation. It became independent on 30/11/1966, within the Commonwealth of Nations. At present, 96% of the population is of African origin, 2% Asian, and 2% European. English is the official language. Most people of Barbados are Protestant by religion. Barbados is also the seat of a branch of the University of the West Indies.

Barbados' economy was based traditionally on agriculture: sugarcane, maize, cotton and rice. There are few mineral resources and some natural gas. Most of the industry is based on sugar and some light manufactures. Tourism is at present the greatest earner of the island.

The history of Islam in Barbados is similar to that of Jamaica. First, many Africans brought in the 18th Century were Muslims. But the harsh treatment of slavery made any survival of Islam impossible. Most enslaved Africans were brought from present-day Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. Some of their Islamic culture remains to this day, such as the "Cou-Cou" (couscous), a national dish in Barbados made up of cornmeal, okra and flying fish. Then, came many Indian Muslims as indentured laborers in the 19th Century, mostly from Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam. But their numbers were so small that they were threatened by total absorption.

Today, the presence of Islam in Barbados is the result of free immigration of mostly Bengalis and Gujaratis (from India). The first, believed to be Basharat Ali Hoogi, arrived from Bengal in 1915. He later married a local woman, like most other Bengalis. His descendants do not identify as Muslims any more. Hoogi was followed by friends and relatives. By 1926, they numbered about 15 Bengali Muslims in Barbados.

In 1928, an advertisement appeared in the papers of Gujarat in India claiming that Brasil needed manpower and offered land to immigrants. Three men from Kafleta Village, in the Surat District (Gujarat), Musa Patel, Suleiman Kassogi and Ismael Mamadh travelled by boat to French Guiana only to discover that the advertisement was false. The two first ones, who were Hafiz (knowing Qur'an by heart) moved to British Guiana and then to Barbados. They met the Bengalis there, who were living in two groups, one in Tudor Street and the other in Wellington Street, both in Bridgetown. Each Gujarati joined a group and became their religious leader. The last Bengali immigrant, by the name of Ali, was Muezzin in the City Mosque until he died in 1990.

By 1929, three more Muslims moved from Gujarat French Guiana with the hope of settling in Brasil. They met Ismael Mamadh in Cayenne and the four of them moved to British Guiana. Two of them

settled in British Guiana, one moved to Panama, and Ismael Mamadh moved to Barbados. Then, the three Gujarati Muslims in Barbados sent letters of invitation to their relatives. Four groups of three or four persons each joined them in the period 1929-1934. By 1936, there were 15 Gujaratis in Barbados.

In 1937, the largest Gujarati group, counting 12 men, arrived in Barbados. It included Ibrahim Deghia, Yusuf Sacha (al 'alim), and Yusuf Bulbulia, the three highly educated. World War II broke out in 1939 and no more Gujaratis arrived until 1947. By then, 27 Gujaratis emigrated to Barbados, one returned to India and one died, leaving a population of 25 men.

In 1947-1948, the Gujaratis settled in Barbados were followed by 24 relatives, all men, bringing the total to about 49 persons. Most married Creole women but, to the difference of Bengalis, they made sure to explain Islam to them and they raised their children as Muslims. Thus, Islam survived in their descendants. More Gujaratis arrived later, especially through uniting of families and marriage. All are now Barbadian citizens. Most were tradesmen selling on credit. Most came from two villages, Kafleta (Surat District) and Telada (Balsar District).

After independence in 1966, the Government led by Erroll Walton stopped Indian immigration to Barbados. But since 1976, when the Labor Party led by the late Tom Adams took power, they allowed foreign spouses to settle in Barbados, thus allowing for the continuation of Gujarati immigration.

Thus, the total number of Muslims in Barbados may be estimated in 1991 at about 2,600 (1% of the total population). Of this total, about 2,000 Muslims are Gujarati in origin (or partly as many mothers are Creole), 300 are African Barbadian revert, 200 are originally from Trinidad and Guyana, and 100 are from various origins including Bengal, Pakistan and Madras (India). These numbers are increasing in

spite of the emigration of about 100 Barbadian Muslims to Canada, England and New Zealand, including four 'alims.

Now, the Muslim Community includes four medical doctors, four accountants, one civil engineer, ten big businessmen and five car rental agents. The majority of the rest are self-employed businessmen.

At present, there are in Barbados three mosques: two mosques controlled by the Tablighi Jamaat, closer to the Anjuman Sunnatul-Jamaat Association (ASJA), and one Islamic Teaching Center under its own committee, closer to the Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG), both ASJA and IMG are in neighboring Trinidad. There are educational activities in the three institutions, and full cooperation between them.

The first Muslim organization was established by Ibrahim Deghia, Maulawi Yusuf Sacha and Maulawi Ahmed Said Piprawala (all from Kafleta, Gujarat), under the name of Barbados Muslim Association (BMA). Ibrahim Deghia, born in Kafleta in 1904, remained its President until he died on 24/2/1968. In 1950, BMA bought an old house in Sober's Lane (Bridgetown), and converted it into a temporary Mosque. Later, a permanent Mosque was built on the site and inaugurated in 7/2/1957. It was extended in 1988. It is called now the City Mosque and the association is called today City Masjid Jamaat. Half the Gujaratis belong to this Jamaat. Ibrahim Deghia was succeeded by Ahmed Suleiman Raja, a Gujarati salesman. In 1995, the President was Maulawi Mohammed Khawladia, originally from Kalachha Village (Surat District). The Imam is Hafiz Ashraf Piprawala (from Kafleta). Regular prayers held in this mosque and hundreds are present in Friday prayers. The Mosque can accommodate about 200 worshippers at a time. The daily evening Islamic School serves around 80 children. The khutba is in Urdu or Gujarati.

In 1950, a group led by Hajji Mohamed Patel, from Dabhel Village (Nausari District of Gujarat), Maulavi Ahmed Dawood Pandor, Hajji Mohammed Yusuf Deghia and Hajji Mohammed Said Piprawala (all

three from Kafleta) separated from BMA and established a new Jamaat. They bought a land in Kensington Road in Britgetown and built a Mosque in the same year. It is known today as the Juma Masjid, and is the largest of the two mosques. In 1991, it was expanded to accommodate 600 faithful at a time. In 1995, the President of the Juma Masjid Jamaat was Dr. Mohammed Chafi Nagdee (from Kachholi, Gujarat), a medical doctor, and the Imam is Hafiz Abderrahman Memi (from Dabhel, Gujarat). This Mosque is very active and its evening Islamic School gives daily classes to more than 120 children.

Since 1958, Ibrahim Deghia and his son Mohammed Deghia (born in Kafleta in 12/7/1929) started a da'wah effort among Barbadians of African origin which had some success, as six embraced Islam. Since 1966, they started thinking about establishing an Islamic Teaching Center to serve the new Muslims.

In 1966, both Deghias and two other Barbadian Muslims attended the conference in Trinidad that established the Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG). They then started an IMG branch in Barbados with the clear idea of bringing Islam to the Creole. After the death of Ibrahim, his son Mohammed succeeded him as the leader of the new formation. In the period 1969-1974, IMG Barbados run on Radio Barbados a program named Voice of Islam, led by Mohammed Deghia, Abdul-Samed Pandor (Son of Ahmed Dawud Pandor) and Mohammed Said Kothdiwala. Many African-Barbadians joined Islam as a result including Dawud Abdul-Haqq and the late Mohammed Ali. In 1972, they were both sent to the Islamic University in Medinah (Saudi Arabia). The first graduated and returned to Barbados in 1977, the second returned in 1974 because of illness and died in 1991.

In 1975, IMG-Barbados started the Islamic Teaching Center of Barbados (ITCB) in a rented house in Tudor Street (Bridgetown). They moved afterwards from one rented location to another in the Saint Michael Parish until they raised enough funds to buy a house in

1980 in Harts Gap (Christ Church Parish). They repaired the house and converted it into an Islamic Center. The driving force behind establishing ITCB was its Director, Dawud Abdul Haqq. He operated full-time his own grocery store for his livelihood and volunteered his time to ITCB.

In 1979, Dawud Abdul-Haqq left to Guyana to work with the late Ahmed Ibrahim Ehwaz (the then Charge d'Affaire of Libya) and then for the Islamic Trust in Trinidad. He returned to Barbados in 1984. During his absence, he was replaced by Mohammed Deghia until 1980 and then by Sheikh Faisal Boadi (a Ghanean sent by Dar-ul-Ifta of Saudi Arabia). Dawud Abdul-haqq remained Ameer and Imam of the ITGB Jamaat until 1992. In 1993, he left to Bahamas where he is now the Imam of the Bahamas Muslim Community. In 1995, the ITCB President was Desmond Abdul-Sabur, an African Barbadian who works with the Transport Department of the Government. The Imam was Suleiman Bulbulia (son of Mohammed son of Yusuf Bulbulia who arrived from Gujarat).

Actually, ITCB acts as a full-fledged Islamic Center. It devised special educational and social programs for Muslim youth. The five daily and Friday prayers are held regularly and more than fifty faithful are usually present on Fridays. ITGB has a da'wah training program on Saturdays. On Sundays, Qur'an and Arabic language are taught, and two study circles are organized to teach Islamic principles to adults. Furthermore, Sunday classes for children and youth and leadership training courses are regularly given.

An ITCB editorial committee prepares frequent releases published in the local press, such as "Jesus is not God" and "On the Hijaab". It publishes a weekly column, called "Muslim View", in one of the local Sunday newspapers on Islam and matters relating to Muslims in general. ITCB also donates regularly Islamic books to the University of the West Indies libraries.

To keep away the Muslim youth from the un-Islamic behavior occurring on Carnival weekends (February) of each year, ITCB organizes parallel programs for leadership training for both boys and girls, often with the participation of Muslim youth from neighboring Trinidad.

In the socio-economic field, ITCB established a multi purpose co-op for Muslims and a Muslim Credit Union. It trains youth and finance them to start them off in business or trade as to protect them from joblessness. It also gets involved in the halal meat business for the entire island, starting a farm to raise poultry and sheeps.

The American organization "Mission of Islam" (MI) headed by Louis Farrakhan established a center in 1975 at Roebuck Street in Bridgetown. Its first Ameer is Mohammed Nasser, a businessman. However, it seems that most MI members joined ITCB and no center was being maintained by them in 1995.

In September 1990, the Barbados Muslim Community was upset with a Hijab controversy similar to that of France. As Nagla Rushdan, a 15 year old Afro-Barbadian Muslim girl, entered her class with a head-scarf, she was dismissed from school. The mother of the girl, Beverley Rushdan, complained to Imam Da'ud Abdul-Haqq who discussed the matter with the headmistress to no avail. Then, the Muslim Community took the matter to the Ministry of Education and the courts. The local press kept this matter on front page for about three weeks. It was debated in the papers and even in Parliament. Some non-Muslims were crying that "freedom has its limits" and that "Muslims must conform". The Muslim Community felt aggrieved by what it considered a high level of hypocrisy in a country beset by high rates of teenage pregnancies in its high schools. The Barbados's Union of Teachers stood by the headmistress. But eventually the Ministry of Education granted permission to the Muslim girl to return to school with her head-scarf on, and the courts ruled on her favor.

The girl later turned out to be one of the most brilliant Barbadian students who received Government scholarship to study abroad.

Also, Muslim students at the West Indies University in Barbados formed "The Muslim Students Movement" (MSM) based in the Cave Hill Campus. MSM are active in spreading Islamic knowledge through publications and lectures. It celebrates Muslim festivals and holds Juma prayers regulary on campus. MSM is very effective in creating Islamic awareness in the Muslim youth at the University.

In 1989, the Barbados Muslim Community was proud to see two Barbadian Muslim students receive Barbados scholarships for outstanding results in the Advanced level Cambridge examinations. These are Dawood Pandor and Mujahid Khalid. They were to go to Cambrige University (England) for further studies.

The Barbados Muslim Community is blessed with good leadership, committed teachers of Islam and a relatively rich business elite which contributes generously to Muslim causes.

In 1993, Barbados had 10 qualified male imams, graduated from India, and 5 qualified female ones. There were 33 hafiz (those who know Qur'an by heart) and six medical doctors.

The Barbados Muslim Community is planning to start a fulltime girls' Muslim Secondary School, followed by another for boys. It also acquired land which has been approved to be a Muslim Cemetary. It is also planning to increase its da'wah to the population at large and to establish closer coordination between its three Muslim jamaats.

Finally, it must be said, that the Barbados Muslim Community practically doubles in numbers every ten years as it grows through three means: natural growth, immigration, and conversion. It is expected to become soon one of the most important Muslim communities of the Caribbean.

7- Islam in Belize

Belize is located in Central America, limited to the North by Mexico, to the South and East by Guatemala, and to the East by the Caribbean Sea. It is nevertheless considered part of the Caribbean for historic and ethnic reasons similar to those of Guyana, French Guiana and Surinam. Belize is a forest-covered plain and has a tropical climate. The capital is Belize City and the official language is English. Its area is 22,965 km.

Britain conquered Belize in 1862 from Guatemala, the latter kept its claim to it to this day. It was then made part of Jamaica and was named British Honduras. In 1884, it became a separate colony. In 1963, it received its autonomy under its new name. It became later fully independent and member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Belize total population was about 68,000 in 1951, and 200,000 in 1991, thus increasing rapidly. Today, about 25% of the population live in the Belize City. It is in majority of African origin, the rest being Spanish, American Indian (mainly Mayas) and others. Two-third of the population is Catholic and one third is Protestant. There are about 4,000 Arab Christians, mostly Lebanese.

Most Belizians live of agriculture. They produce sugarcane, maize, rice, cotton and bananas. They also raise cattle and some are fishermen.

In 1991, Belize Muslims could be estimated to number about 2,500 (1.25% of the total population). They are of different origins: Indian, Arab (mostly Lebanese and Palestinian), etc.... but the majority are returnees to Islam of various origins: African, Spanish and Mayan.

As elsewhere in America, the first Muslims to reach Belize were enslaved Africans. In 1830, it was very common to find Muslims in Belize who avoided alcohol. Indeed, the "Honduras Almanac of 1830" mentions in page 7 the following:

"It was not uncommon to find Black persons who had an utter aversion to spirituous liquors or beverages in which they know to have

a component part, whilst, on the other hand, many are so strongly addicted to this low and degrading gratification, that they are to be seen at no very reasonable hours exposed to the scorching sun or the midnight dew, in more than brutal insensibility. Some have been accustomed from infancy to indulge in these vices whilst others in rejecting it, act no so much from a correct principle (sic) as from national usage, or original intercourse with Mahometan connections".

Other references talk about persons who had utter aversion to pork and its by-products. They prayed five times a day, fasted during the month of Ramadhan and gave charity. Some of these Muslims were real scholars. But the British and other Christian slave-masters made laws to contain Islamic practices and force Muslims into Christianity. Thus, Islam practically died out among the descendants of enslaved Africans after the second or third generation of the first arrivals.

By the end of the 19th Century some Arabs arrived from Lebanon, most of them were Christian, but few were Muslim. They were later joined by several Indian Muslims. But until 1962, there was no organized Muslim presence in Belize.

Early in 1962, an advertisement was published in the Belize Times inviting the public to a series of Islamic meetings to be held at the Liberty Hall on Barrack Road in Belize City. The organizer of these meetings was Minister Charles X Eagan, now Ibrahim Abdullah. He taught "Islam" as preached then by the late Elijah Muhammad in Chicago (Illinois, USA). The first Belizian to convert to his teachings was Ismail O Shabbaz (his new Muslim name), followed by Rudolph Farrakhan.

These three first Muslims formed the original nucleus from which Islam spread in Belize, and the core of what was to become the "Islamic Mission of Belize". They opened during that same year the first "Temple of Islam" in Belize City on Freetown Road, in front of the Belize Technical College.

From the beginning, these first Muslims had to face official oppression and police harassment. By the end of 1962, police agents broke up one of the Islamic meetings the group held at the Court house Plaza. Minister Charles X Eagan was arrested, and charged with discrimination against the White Race. Elijah Muhammad taught then that the White Race was the essence of evil and the devil incarnate. Minister Eagan was taken to court and sentenced to two weeks mental observation in what was known as "Crazy House". He eventually spent four weeks with the mentally deranged, after which he was released, and the charges dropped later on.

The number of converts kept on increasing. In spite of difficulties, Belize Muslims increased in strength and started influencing Belizian society in different aspects. They set up the first Village Council in the Village of More-Tomorrow, where they also established and managed the first school. In July 1967, they hosted the world heavy-weight boxing champion, Muhammad-Ali of the USA. Between 1968 and 1972, they helped form and promote the first Black movement in Belize, known as the "United Black Association for Development" (UBAD).

Since 1972, the new Muslims of Belize began a transitional phase of leadership and direction which brought them in full line with the Ummah, and bringing together all the components of the Belize Muslim Community.

On 26/2/1975, Elijah Muhammad passed away in the USA. He was replaced as Imam of the "Black Muslim" movement by his eldest son Wallace D Muhammad. The latter began to remove the ideas and views propagated by his father that conflicted with Islam. In short, he directed his followers in the USA and elsewhere, including Belize, into the mainstream of Islam. The White Race was not classified any more as the Race of Devils, and in fact color became completely irrelevant. It is now the brotherhood of all the human race that had to

be called toward Islam. Thus, a new strength was gained by the Belize Muslim Community.

By 1978, the Belize Muslim Community was officially incorporated and recognized by the Government as the "Islamic Mission Belize" (IMB). It became functioning in full autonomy from the USA. During the decade 1975-1985, the Belize Muslim Community was compelled to rent several buildings for its da'wah program, community activities, and its school.

In its early years, the educational activities of the Belize Muslim Community comprised a kindergarten, primary education for Muslim children during the day, and Islamic education for adults at nights. In 1975, it opened a view Muslim school in Belize City as a private institution.

In 1979, the Muslim School was accepted as a Government aided school, thus the Government started paying the salary of one teacher for every 60 students. As the student population grew, non-Muslim children were also attracted. The academic curriculum is the same as in all other Belizian primary school. In addition, Islamic education is given in the form of Arabic language, Qur'anic recitals, Islamic history and Islamic worship and morals. In 1994, the Muslim School enrollment reached 400. The Government paid the salaries of three teachers and IBM that of one more. In addition three teachers work voluntarily to give Islamic subjects to children at day, and adults at night. The Muslim School is an IMB property. Its first floor has been completed by funds from overseas and from the Belize Muslim Community. It is located at the corner of Central American Boulevard and Fabers Road in Belize City.

Since its inception, IMB has had five consecutive presidents. These are Ibrahim Abdullah (formerly Minister Charles X Eagan); Nuri Muhammad; C. Omar Hassan; Kaleem El-Amin; and Ismail Omar Shabbaz.

IMB also built its mosque, the first in Belize, with funds from the country and from outside. Friday and daily prayers are held regularly and a religious program is given on Mondays afternoon. Over the years, IMB established contacts with other Muslim communities in the Caribbean, the USA, Canada., Mexico, Central and South America, Africa and Arab countries.

In 1990, members of the New Medina Society, a Muslim community settlement in the Appalachian Mountains of Georgia (USA), emigrated en masse to join the Belize Muslim Community, thus increasing its numbers.

IMB has a very popular weekly Islamic radio program. Islamic seminars are held in different villages and attract great interest. For instance, the seminar held on 10/12/1989 in the Village of Hopkins included 24 participants and four lecturers. This led 100 families in this village to sign a written petition requesting IMB to open an Islamic School in their village.

IMB also engages in an agricultural project on a parcel of 800 acres of lease land from the Belize Government. Individual Muslims in Belize and abroad were invited to join in its development at the rate of two to ten acres per person.

The Belize Muslim Community is growing at a fast rate and has a bright future. The Black Caribs, an American Indians tribe, believed to be of pre-Columbus Islamic African origin, are returning to Islam in great numbers and building their mosques along the Caribbean coast. In 1994, two new Jamaats have been established one by Nuri Mohammad in Belize City. The other by Ismael Shabbaz in Matamoro.

8 - Islam in the Netherlands Antilles

The Netherlands Antilles (NA) is an autonomous state linked with Aruba, Suriname and the Netherlands in a commonwealth. It has its

own government and parliament. Its capital is Willemstad in the island of Curacao. Its official language is Dutch. Its total population was 111,000 in 1951 and 193,000 in 1991, including about 2,000 Muslims (1% of the total). Its total area is 836 km.

NA is made up of two island groups : the first includes two coral islands at 60 km from the Venezuelan coast (Curacao and Bonaire) ; and the second is made up of three volcanic islands at 900 km from Curacao, East of Puerto Rico. They are : the third of St Martin Island (46 km), the rest being part of French Guadeloupe, St Eustachio (26 km), and Saba (13 km). Aruba was part of NA until it opted out in 1986. The areas and populations of NA islands are shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 : The Components of the Netherlands Antilles in 1991

Island	area Km	Population	Nber of Muslims
Curacao	461	171,000	1,600
Bonaire	290	10,000	100
North	85	12,000	300
Total	836	193,000	2,000

NA's climate is tropical, and the economy is based on agriculture (sugarcane and bananas), tourism, petroleum industry, and transit, as NA is a free zone. Oil from Venezuela is transited and refined in Curacao.

NA islands were conquered by Spain around 1499. The Netherlands took away Curacao from Spain in 1634 and Saba in 1640. In 1648, the Netherlands conquered St Martin from Spain and shared it with France. In 1676, they conquered Bonaire and St Eustachius.

The original Carib population of the Northern Islands were exterminated early by the Spanish and Dutch. The original Arawaks disappeared from Curacao in 1790, and from Bonaire in 1810. At

present, 84% of NA's population are descendants of enslaved Africans brought in by the Dutch in the 17th and 18th centuries, about 6% are Whites, 5% are East Indian, and the rest are mixed. English is spoken in the Northern islands and Papamiento, a Creole language based on Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese, in the Southern Islands. Papamiento is a written language now, and Dutch, the official language, is understood by all. About 80% of the people are Catholic and 10% are Protestant, most of the rest have no religion.

Christian Arabs of Lebanese origin have good influence in NA. At one point the Prime Minister was an Arab Greek Orthodox (Ramez Issa), the Minister of Education an Arab Catholic (Ricardo Al-Hadj) and the Governor of Curacao another Arab Catholic (Ilyas Marcos). In 1991, the Prime Minister was Ms Liberia Peters.

All NA Muslims are citizens, and most are born in these islands, with the exception of those of St Martin who arrived recently. More than half of those of Curacao are Lebanese, mostly from the area of Tripoli, the rest are either Indian or African. The latter, new revert, are increasing rapidly. In Bonaire, most Muslims are also Lebanese and Indian, and in the Northern Islands they are mostly Palestinian. Most Muslims work as tradesmen. The NA Muslim Community is organized in two associations, one centered in Willemstad (Curacao) for the Southern Islands, and the other in St Martin, for the Northern Islands.

Andalucian Muslim refugees and enslaved African Muslims left no trace. In Curacao, Lebanese Muslims arrived in the 19th Century. They left some impact as many streets in the capital have Muslim names, such as Muhammad Street, Mecca Street, Medina Street, Hijra Street, and the like.

Curacao Muslims established the "Muslim Association of Curacao" (MAC) in 1963 and registered it on 21/1/1964. The moving force behind this effort was Ra'fat Dinnawi, a Lebanese. Other

important MAC members were its successive presidents : Omar Ayyoubi, El-Hajji Hachem, and Bassam Dinnawi.

In 1963, MAC bought a house in Willemstad, where it built a Mosque in 1964, the first in NA. It built later a house for the Imam nearby. The Mosque is located near the sea in a fashionable part of Willemstad as this author could see when he visited it in 10-11/12/1973. In 1980, it was renovated into a full Islamic Center which now includes the Mosque, the house of the Imam, a library, an auditorium, offices and classrooms. The Mosque can accommodate over 500 faithful. The area of the buildings is 1,500 m. Another 500 m are used as parking facilities for 50 cars and sports ground for the youth. MAC wishes to buy land nearby as the Islamic Center needs more expansion.

From the start, MAC was able to finance its activities. Nevertheless, Curacao Muslims were badly hurt in 1969 by the violence that swept their island lending to riots and the burning of their shops. However, MAC managed to bring imams for teaching Muslims and heading the activities of the Islamic Center. Table 7.2 gives the names of these Imams and their origin. MAC tried to find outside sources for finance to help in its activities.

Table 7.2 : The Imams of Curacao

Name	Date of mission	origin	Source of Salary
Zahran Ibrabim	1964 – 1968	Egypt	Libya
Sati' Al-Jumayli	1968	Iraq	Community
Abdussalam	1968 – 1978	Egypt	Libya
Sirhan Jawhari	1978 – 1980	Egypt	Libya
Marwan Ayyoubi	1980 – 1991	Lebanon	Libya
Mahmud Hussein	1991	Egypt	Community
A.-Rahim Duhaybi	1991-now	Lebanon	Community

The Imam visits homes. On week-ends, he teaches in the Mosque Arabic, the principles of Islam and Qur'an, to children and adults. About 40 people attend Friday prayers regularly in the Mosque. However, the Mosque is always open for the five daily prayers. Usually about twenty faithful are present in the evening prayers. During Eid prayers, almost all Muslims show up, including women and children.

MAC put in charge a member, Hussein Abdul-Hameed, to write a weekly Islamic full-page article in one of the six dailies of Curacao, on several aspects of Islam. His articles are in general in Papiamento, and sometimes in English or Dutch. They are becoming very popular in Curacao.

Realizing the importance of Muslim youth, MAC established in the early 1980's the "Foundation of Muslim Youth" (FMY) in Willemstad (Curacao) for Da'wah purpose. They rented an apartment in the center of town which they used as library, and two offices. FMY manages a weekly Islamic radio program. It sells Islamic books and distributes pamphlets on different aspects of Islam.

The Curacao Muslim Community owns its own Muslim cemetery. For many years they were hoping to start a full-time Muslim Primary School. But at present they only hold Friday and Saturday afternoon classes.

The Muslims of Bonaire are linked to MAC and the Islamic institutions of Curacao. There is no specific Islamic organization in Bonaire nor any Islamic institution.

The center of Islamic activity in the Northern Islands is St Martin, where most Muslims are of Palestinian origin. Muslims started emigrating to St Martin after World War II. One of the first immigrants is a Palestinian chemical engineer, Mohamed Hosein. At present, about ten stores in the Dutch St Martin are owned by Muslims.

In 1988, St Martin Muslims organized the "Islamic Center of St Martin" (ICSM). They carried out their activities in a temporary prayer hall until they built their first Mosque in 1991 two-third of which contributed by one member of the Community. Friday and the five daily prayers are held regularly in the Mosque. Lectures are also given to the young and adults by a voluntary Imam, a debout Palestinian named Muhammad Mansour. Other leaders of the Community are Muhammad El-Isis, Saadullah Mustapha, and Abdul-Hamid, among others.

The few Muslims in the islands of Saba and St Eustachus are served by ICSM.

Islam in NA is growing fast. The NA Muslim Community is well linked to other Muslim communities on the Caribbean, and their representatives participate in most regional activities and conferences.

9 - Islam in the Bahamas

The Bahamas are an archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean situated Southeast of Florida (USA) and extending more than 1,300 km to the South and East. They comprise 700 low-lying islands and more than 2,000 cays and rocks, mostly coral but with some limestone. The main islands and their areas are reported in Table 9.1. Only about 30 islands are inhabited. The name comes from Spanish "Baja Mar", meaning "Shallow Banks".

Table 9.1 : The Bahamas

Island	Area (km)
Andros	4,144
Abacos	2,010
Inagua	1,450
Grand Bahama	1,114
Eleuthera	425
New Providence	150
Others	4,645
Total	13,938

The most populated island, New Providence, is where the capital, Nassau, is located. The population of the Bahamas was 85,000 in 1951 and about 260,000 people in 1991, half of them in Nassau. About 85% of the people are of African origin, the rest are mostly European. Most people are Protestant, the rest are mostly Catholic. The language is English.

The vegetation of the Bahamas is mostly subtropical scrub. But traditionally the people live of fishing and seafaring. However, tourism is the most income-generating activity of the country, as more than two million tourists visit it yearly.

The first landfall of Columbus in his first voyage in 1492 was the island of Guanabani (new San Salvador). In the period 1492 - 1508, Spain carried off about 40,000 Arawak natives of the Bahamas to work in the mines of Hispaniola. They were eventually exterminated. The Islands remained empty for more than one century until they were settled by enslaved Africans brought in later by the British. During that century, the islands were visited regularly by the Spanish without settling them permanently.

In 1648, the Bahamas were first settled by the British. They were held as grants by the lord proprietors of Carolina (in the USA now). In 1717, they became a crown colony, and remained so continuously, except for a brief period in 1782-3 when they were held by Spain. Slavery was abolished in 1834. In 1964, the Bahamas were granted self-government. In 10/7/1973, they became fully independent and member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Islam arrived to the Bahamas with the enslaved Africans. However, its present rebirth is due to the influence of African-American revert to Islam. There are several Islamic banks in the Bahamas, such as Dar-ul-Mal Al-Islami, Masraf Faisal Al-Islami and Al-Taqwa Bank.

The first Muslim of Bahamas was Burhan Saladin who became Muslim in the early 1960's through a person named Shaka Khan. He

died in early 1994 in the USA. More Bahamians became Muslim in the USA through the then known group of the "Lost-Found Nation of Islam" of the late Elijah Mohamed. In 1972, Omar Abu-Bakr became Muslim through the Hanafi Group in the USA. He started preaching Islam in the Bahamas, many converted including Zubair Ali.

In 1973, Zubair Ali joined effort with Burhan Saladin and opened a temporary Mosque "The mosque of Allah" in the first floor of a building in Nassau and established in the ground floor the "Muslim Training Center". The purpose was to introduce Islam to the Bahamians.

Around 1975, a group of Muslims, including Zubair Ali, Khalil Khan, Faisal Abdurrahman Hepburn and Syed Kalamuddin, a former dentist from India (now Hospital administrator in Texas) joined them in forming the first Muslim Association "Jamaat-ul-Islam" (JI). its first Imam was Kamaluddin, includes Muslims from the Bahamas and those of foreign origin (India, Pakistan, Africa, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Dominica, Barbados, etc...). The Ameer in 1995 was Faisal Abdurrahman Hepburn (from the Bahamas) and the Imam was Daud Abdul-Haqq (from Barbados), since 1994. It is run by a Shura Council.

In 1995, the number of Bahamas Muslims was about 1,500 (0,6% of total population). About 1,000 of them are revert, and the rest are mostly of East Indian origin. In 1982, he was able to purchase a property for use as an Islamic Center in Nassau and two acres of land. Congregational Friday and daily prayers are held regularly in its Islamic Center. Classes are given to children and adults by Hassan Karimullah, originally from Trinidad. He plans to build a more adequate Islamic Center and a full-time Islamic School on its plot of land. Construction started in 1994. A co-op was also formed between the Muslims.

By 1995, he sent young Bahamians for Islamic studies in Dar-ul-Uloom (Trinidad) and in the Guyana Islamic Institute (Guyana) where three Bahamian students were registered.

The Bahamas Muslim Community has to struggle continuously against the loose morals prevailing in their country. In 1990, they condemned homosexuality and called upon the Bahamas Government to set laws to govern harmful behavior. They feel that the Bahamas need a spiritual and moral overhaul if they are to develop as a nation. In 1991, they made a call to curtail the 24-hour bar service prevalent in the islands.

The Bahamas Muslim Community has also to struggle against bias. In 1991, they had to respond to the broadcast of Kingsley Fletcher attacking Islam. They believe that many teachers in the education system are trampling over the rights of Muslim children who are being harassed for their dress and subjected without the consent of their parents to Christian religious proselytism.

The Bahamas Islamic Community is growing fast, mostly through conversion. It is establishing its Islamic institutions and tries to develop a clean moral-minded society in a land where vice became business.

10 - Islam in Grenada

Grenada is one of the small Antilles. It is mountainous, with the highest peak, a dead volcano, reaching 840 m above sea level, bordered with narrow plains. It is located at the North-East of Trinidad and at the South-West of Barbados. It has an area of 311 km, with the small southern Grenadines (Carriacou and smaller islets) having an area of 33 km. The climate is tropical.

The population of Grenada was 79,000 in 1951 and 91,000 in 1991. It reached a peak of 111,000 in 1979 to fall back to the above value, due to large emigration, mainly to the USA. The capital is St

George. The official language is English, spoken by most, but a French Patois survives. Most people are of African origin (95%), and 5% are East Indians. Most are Protestant.

Grenada was used to be covered by forest, long time ago replaced by agricultural land. The country produces cacao, cotton, sugarcane, bananas and spices. Tourism is also an important source of income.

Grenada visited by Columbus in 1498. In 1650, it was conquered by France. They exterminated the local Caribs, and brought in enslaved Africans to plant for them tobacco and indigo. In 1762, France ceded Grenada to Britain who brought in more enslaved Africans.

In 1958, Grenada became part of the short-lived Federation of the West Indies, disbanded in 1962. In 1967, it became one of the West Indies Associated States. On 7/2/1974, it became fully independent, and member of the Commonwealth of Nations. In 1979, the New Jewel Movement staged a bloodless coup and proclaimed the People's Revolutionary Government headed by Maurice Bishop. This Government leaned toward Cuba and the Communist World. On 15/10/1983, a counter-coup was staged by General Hudson Austin who executed Bishop and several of his ministers. Ten days later, the US Marines landed in Grenada and ran it until December 1984, when a democratically elected Government took over it.

There were in 1994 about 1,200 Muslims in Grenada (1,3% of the total population), including about 600 local returnees to Islam. The others are mostly of East Indian origin.

Islam reached Grenada with enslaved Africans in the 18th Century. The most compact group of African Muslims rebelled and entrenched themselves in a locality called Palmiste. They were defeated and totally exterminated. No trace of this first Islamic presence remains today.

The modern presence of Islam is due to an East Indian, Muhammad Yusuf, who came to Grenada in the early 1970's from

Trinidad. He started preaching Islam to Grenadians and when about 21 revert joined him, he established with them the "Islamic Foundation of Grenada" (IFG). The number of Muslim returnees grow quickly over the 100 mark. By the end of the 1970's, the Government recognized the Muslim Community and granted it a piece of land on which it built an Islamic Center where congregational prayers were held regularly, and a shop of crafts was established.

The 1979 coup and 1983 counter-coup were catastrophic to Muslims. The revolutionary Government executed five Muslim army officers and took away the IFG property. Under this Government the Muslim Community remained dispersed and underground.

After democracy was re-established, the remaining Muslims reorganized under the impetus of Imam Muhammad Yusuf and an East Indian Grenadan businessman, Azam Rahman Ansari. They re-established IFG which opened its new center on the top floor of a building in St George, called Bobby's Tyre Service. The facility belongs to Ansari who lent it to the Muslim Community free of charge. Friday and other congregational prayers are again held regularly, led by Imam Bilal (African Grenadan), about 20 people usually attend. Arabic and Islamic classes are given on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Khalid and Imam Bilal are the teachers.

Efforts are being made to establish a permanent Islamic Center to replace the temporary one being used now. The Caribbean Islamic Secretariat in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad) assigned in 1993 Sheikh Nyron Hassan Gonzales of Trinidad to teach Islam and Arabic in the IFG Islamic Center.

The IFG has several economic activities to help the Muslim Community. It established a leather workshop and promotes trade between the Muslims of Grenada and those of nearby Trinidad, exporting spices, fruits, garden produces and goats.

Shaikh Faisal Boadi, a Ghanean, visited Grenada on 20-25/8/1989, and made great efforts to unite the different elements of the Muslim

Community, especially the African Grenadan returnees to Islam and the East Indians. He succeeded in arranging an agreement between them to work together. He managed to accommodate Grenadan Muslim students in Trinidadian Islamic schools and to register once more IFG with the Government of Grenada as a religious body. The International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) also offered IFG a collection of Islamic books. An interim Executive Committee was established and a new constitution was drafted.

Muslim youth camps became then a regular IFG activity and the week-end Islamic School became better organized. Grenadan youth went for high Islamic studies in the Islamic University of Medina (Saudi Arabia) and the Islamic University of Umm-Durman (Sudan). However, some of the graduates settled as Imams in other countries, such as the USA.

Internal conflicts in the Islamic Community of Grenada led to the establishment of two new Muslim associations in Grenada ; namely, the Tablighi Jamaat who formed their own group in St George, and Dar-ul-Islam who established themselves in St Andrews.

There is an American (USA) Medical School in Grenada, usually attended by more than 20 Muslim students, hailing from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Guyana, Sri Lanka, Iran and other countries. The students usually spend two years in Grenada, and spend three more years in the USA to complete their course. Most students are American citizens, and some are very active in helping the Muslim Community of Grenada.

Islam in Grenada has a good future. Its Muslim Community has been growing regularly since 1984. It is now planning to build an Islamic Center and Mosque and a full-time Islamic Primary School.

11 - Islam in Guadeloupe

Since 1946, Guadeloupe became an Overseas French Department. It is located between Antigua and Montserrat in the North, and Dominica in the South. Its capital is Basse-Terre on the main island. The total area of Guadeloupe is 1,779 km, made up of two interlinked large islands, Grande-Terre (566 km) and Basse-Terre (940 km), separated by a narrow channel called Riviere Salee. Basse-Terre is high and rugged with a central chain of volcanic peaks and ridges, culminating in la Soufriere (1,484 m) which erupted in 1797 and 1836 and is still a living volcano. Grande-Terre is made up of limestone, it is low-lying and flat with its highest point at 145 m above sea level.

A multitude of small islands belong to Guadeloupe. The most important are La Desirade, Marie-Galante, and Petite Pierre, made up of limestone, and the volcanic Iles Saintes, St Barthelemy and the two-third of St Martin (the other third belongs to the Netherlands Antilles).

The total population of Guadeloupe was 279,000 in 1951, and 382,000 in 1991. There is continuous emigration to the USA, Canada and France, but less than from Martinique.

Columbus visited Guadeloupe in 1493 on his second voyage. It was populated by Caribs who supplanted pre-existing Arawaks. It was named by Columbus after "Santa Maria de la Guadeloupe" in Extramadura, Spain. In 1635, Charles d'Olive and Du Plexis occupied it for the French "Compagnie des Iles d'Amérique" and built the first sugar mill. The Caribs were exterminated and replaced by imported enslaved Africans. In 1674, Guadeloupe passed to the French crown as a dependency of Martinique. In 1775, it became a separate colony. Guadeloupe was occupied by the British in 1759 - 1763 and in 1810 - 1816. Slavery was re-instated by Napoleon in 1802, and abolished permanently in 1848 when 93,000 slaves were freed.

In 1854, France started to bring indentured laborers to Guadeloupe from its East Indian colonies. On 1/2/1861, it signed a convention

with Britain to bring Indian workers from British India as well. The Indian immigration to Guadeloupe lasted for 35 years, from 1854 to 1889, bringing in a total of 42,326 Indians. Of this total 9,460 Indians returned to India at the end of their contracts, and 32,866 Indians remained in Guadeloupe. Few of the descendants of these Indians remain today.

In 1648, St Martin was amicably divided by France and the Netherlands. The same year, France occupied St Bartholomew, ceded it to Sweden in 1784, and took it back in 1877.

The greatest majority of the population is now of African origin. They were forced into Catholicism when they were under slavery. They speak Creole, but the official language is French. The population of St Martin is mostly African, and that of St Bartholomew is mostly French, mainly from Brittany. The economy of Guadeloupe is based on agriculture producing coffee and bananas mainly, and fishing.

Islam reached first Guadeloupe with the enslaved Africans, many of them arriving from Senegal through the Cap Vert Islands. It did not survive among them due to the harsh slave conditions.

The second wave of Muslims came with the Indian indentured laborers. Of the 42,326 Indians who arrived about 14.5% were Muslim, or about 6,140 people. If one assumes that they returned to India in the same proportions as other Indians, about 4,770 Muslim Indians would have remained in Guadeloupe. Some social catastrophe must have fallen upon them as no descendants are left in the island today. Delval mentions Indian Muslim names such as Checkmodine, Cheickboudhan and Goulabkhan in Guadeloupe, with no Islamic conscience among their bearers.

Some Arabs from Syria and Lebanon emigrated to Guadeloupe just before World War II, but the true return of Islam to Guadeloupe came from France itself. In the 1970's, some Guadelupans in France came across African Muslims and accepted Islam. They returned to Guadeloupe to preach it. They were joined by Senegalese Muslims. In

1994, there were about 1,000 Muslims in Guadeloupe (0.3% of the total population), half of them local converts and the others immigrants, mostly from Senegal, but also from Lebanon and Palestine.

The organization of the Muslim Community is the result of the action of a Senegalese, Imam Cissokho. First, he gathered Muslim Africans, mostly Senegalese. In 1981, he established "La Foundation Islamique de Guadeloupe" (Guadeloupe Islamic Foundation, FIG). He then preached Islam to Guadelupans and many embraced it. FIG rented an apartment at Pointe-a-Pitre to be used as its Islamic Center. Since 1988, they started raising funds to buy their center instead of using rented facilities. Imam Cissokho stayed in Guadeloupe until 1988 when he emigrated to French Guiana.

The Islamic Center of Pointe-a-Pitre is very active. Friday and daily congregational prayers are held regularly, with about 60 people attending, including 20 women. Classes of Arabic and Islam are given regularly to Muslims and non-Muslims, children and adults. The FIG Secretary is Said Akinwunni. Other important leaders of the Muslim Community of Guadeloupe are Jawad Durimel, a town clerk, Dr. Khalil Fakin, an ophthalmologist, A.W. Cherif, Abdul-Majid Extus, Fahd Akan, Fred Barca and others. Most live in Point-a-Pitre on Grande-Terre, and around it.

The Muslim Community of Guadeloupe is still in the formation stage. It is in close contact with the Muslims of Martinique and the English-speaking islands, as well as with those of Canada, France and the USA.

12 - Other Countries and Conclusions

Cuba is the largest country of the Caribbean. A Spanish speaking Republic, it has an area of 114,524 km and a population of 11,000,000 in 1991 (5,430,000 in 1951). The capital is Havana. Cuba was

inhabited by Arawaks when conquered by Spain in 1511. It exterminated them and replaced them with enslaved Africans. In 1899, the USA expelled Spain. In 1902, Cuba became independent. In 1953, it was taken over by a Communist regime, which still runs it in 1995. About 73% of Cubans are White, the rest are mostly African. About 80% of Cubans are nominally Catholics, the rest are mostly Protestants. All speak Spanish.

Muslims arrived to Cuba with the Spanish and the Africans, but disappeared with time due to continuous persecution. Since the beginning of this century, emigration from Syria and Lebanon brought in many Muslims, until their number reached about 5,000 Muslims in 1951. Most emigrated to the USA, mainly Florida, after the Communist takeover. In 1994, there were about 1,000 Muslims in Cuba. They are not organized and have no institutions, but they are in contact with the Muslims of the USA. The Communist regime discourages any religious expression, including Muslim. It is certain that an Islamic resurrection will occur as soon as that regime changes.

The Dominican Republic has an area of 44,442 km and had a population of 7,320,000 in 1991 (2,210,000 in 1951). The capital is Santo Domingo. The Republic occupies the eastern two-third of the island of Hispaniola, conquered by Columbus in 1492. In 1705, Hispaniola was taken over by France who was expelled by rebelling enslaved Africans in 1804. However, Spain conquered back the Eastern part in 1809. In 1844, this Spanish part became independent under the above name. In 1994, about 85% of the population were Black and Creole and the rest were White. Most are Catholics by religion and Spanish speakers.

As elsewhere, Islam did not survive in the Andalucian and African presence. The Syrian and Lebanese Muslims did settle in small numbers in the Dominican Republic since the beginning of this century. However, the resurgence of Islam in this Republic occurred since 1980 due to the influence of those Dominicans who became

Muslim in the USA, especially in New York City. Many returned home and preached Islam to their compatriots. They are trying to organize them now. There may be about 500 Muslims in the Dominican Republic in 1994, but they are not organized yet, and they have no Islamic institutions.

Haiti has an area of 27,750 km and a population of 5,800,000 in 1991 (3,200,000 in 1951). The capital is Port-au-Prince. This French-speaking republic occupies the western third of Hispaniola. It was conquered by the French in 1626 who brought in enslaved Africans as labor after exterminating the natives. The slaves rebelled in 1790 and succeeded in bringing independence to the country in 1804. Today, the greatest majority of the people are of African origin. The official language is French, but the people speak Creole. Most people are nominally Catholic.

The origin of many Haitians is Islamic. The French colonial power used to force them to abandon Islam, and did not hesitate to kill those who resisted. The most famous of these early Muslims is Makandal who led the rebellion of 1758. On the turn of this century, some Muslims started to emigrate to Haiti from Syria and Lebanon. But the present Islamic resurrection is due to the influence of Montreal (Canada) which is the home of a large Muslim Haitian Community. Many of its members returned to Haiti to preach Islam. In 1994, there were in Haiti about 500 Muslims. They are in the process of being organized.

St Lucia is a British-speaking independent state, having an area of 616 km and a population of 151,000 in 1991 (80,000 in 1951). In 1994, there were about 300 Muslims scattered around St Lucia, including expatriates and converts. In 1989, they established the "Islamic Society of St Lucia" (ISSL). The most active members of the St Lucia Muslim Community are Dr. Hussein, a planning engineer hailing from Bangladesh, and Leo Poyette, who received Islamic training in Trinidad. ISSL has no Islamic Center yet.

French Guiana is an Overseas French Department, located between Brazil and Surinam. It has an area of 91,000 km and had a population of 117,000 in 1991 (32,000 in 1951). The capital is Cayenne. In 1626, France conquered it and established it as a terrible banishment center which lasted until 1946. The first Muslims of this territory were prisoners from North Africa, banished by France through its wars of conquest of the Maghrib.

France brought into French Guiana 8,472 Indian indentured laborers between 1855 and 1877. Of these, some 1,200 Muslim Indians remained, but they left no trace today. In 1908, Muslims numbered in French Guiana 1,570 persons. They were 2,500 in 1951 (7.8% of the total population), mostly freed prisoners and their descendants. Many emigrated, some remained and married locally. In 1994, there were about 1,000 Muslims in French Guiana (1% of the total population). Many descendants of Muslims have been Christianized such as the Misram family in the Sinnamary Village. The Muslims of French Guiana organized the "Djamiatou Ada'wah Al-Islamica" (JDI), which has an Islamic Center and Mosque in Cayenne. The majority of Muslims are of Algerian and Moroccan origin, some are Africans, others are reverts, yet others are Javanese and East Indians from nearby Surinam. Other centers of Muslim concentration are Saint-Laurent and Kourou. The Muslims of French Guiana are growing once more in numbers through conversion, and in organization.

St Vincent and Grenadines is a British-speaking independent state since 27/10/1979. It has an area of 388 km including the Grenadines, and had a population of 116,000 in 1991 (70,000 in 1951). There are about 250 Muslims, almost all local converts.

Islam in St Vincent started actually in Toronto (Canada) when Halimah John accepted Islam in 1970 with her husband and her two young children in the Jami Mosque of Toronto at the hand of two Egyptian engineering students, Lotfi and Kadri. Halimah John is the

daughter of the late Frederic John, a highly respected citizen of St Vincent and a builder by profession. She had seven brothers and sisters. In 1973, she decided to return to St Vincent and started to preach Islam. Her mother accepted the faith as did her brother Vivian and her sister Aminah. Later three more brothers and sisters accepted the faith as did many of her friends. She was helped in her efforts by the Islamic Missionaries Guild in Trinidad. In St Vincent, she faced great resistance and even police harassment and had to return to Canada in 1974.

In the 1980's, Halimah John spent one year Islamic training in Guyana with the Guyana Islamic Trust where she met Kamal, a citizen of St Vincent who became Muslim in New York City. Kamal returned to St Vincent and with the help of Mohammed Siddiq, another returnee to Islam from St Vincent, built up a community of more than 50 revert. However, this group disintegrated by the end of the decade and Mohammed Siddiq emigrated to England.

Halimah John returned to St Vincent in 1990, her father died in 1991 and received a state funeral. She gathered the Muslims of the island and established in 1991 the "Islamic Association of St Vincent and the Grenadines" (IASVG). She also opened a child development center. IASVG was registered officially, the first meetings held in the home of Vivian John, a businessman. Vivian started Friday prayers and Halimah gives classes on Islam to children on Saturdays, and Islamic study groups are formed on week-ends. IASVG distributed brochures, pamphlets and copies of the Qur'an.

IASVG then rented a house at Level Gardens (Kingstown) with the help of IIFSO. In 1995, the IASVG President was Vivian John and the Vice-President was his sister Halimah. The IASVG members are increasing in number and the association is planning to build its mosque soon.

Dominica is another English-speaking island. It became independent on 3/4/1978, but the people of African origin speak a

French Patois. Its area is 751 km and its population was 109,000 in 1991 (55,000 in 1951). There were in 1991 about 350 Muslims in Dominica, mostly revert. In 1975, they established the "Muslim Community of Dominica" (MCD). By 1988, they rented the top floor of a building in Roseau, the capital, to use it as a temporary Islamic Center. Friday and daily prayers are held regularly, as are weekly Islamic and Arabic language study circles. In 1983, MCD bought two pieces of prime agricultural land, with a total area of 4 hectares, one in the North of the island, the other in Roseau, overlooking the harbor. They wish to build their Islamic Center and Mosque on the latter. Some of the most active members of the Muslim Community of Dominica are Abdullah Sanderson, a graduate of the University of the West Indies in Barbados, Jomo Abdul-Hakim and Kim Faisal Leevy. The MCD present President is Ameer Mohammed Shabbaz Abdullah. The Muslim Community of Dominica suffers from emigration, as three quarters of those who converted to Islam in Dominica eventually emigrated to the UK, Canada or the USA, including some who had good Islamic training such as Suleiman Abdus-Sabur, who received his Islamic training in Guyana.

Antigua and Barbuda are English islands, which became an independent state on 1/11/1981. It has a total area of 442 km and had a population of 87,000 in 1991 (46,000 in 1951). There are about 100 Muslims in this state, mainly in Antigua. About half the Muslims are immigrants, some from Palestine, such as Sobhi Siyam, a businessman, the other half are local revert, such Mu'min Derrick. There is an offshore Medical School in Antigua operated by a Norwegian American Hospital based in Chicago (USA). The students spend their first two years in Antigua and the rest in Chicago. This school has usually more than 30 Muslim students. They formed in 1990 an "Antigua Muslim Students Organization" (AMSO). They hold Friday prayers on campus. They were effective in organizing the Muslim Community of Antigua and Barbuda, especially through the

efforts of Khalid Salam, forming the "Muslim Association of Antigua and Barbuda" (MAAB), headed by Mu'min Derrick. The most active Muslim of Barbuda is Hakim Akbar, a local revert.

Aruba is one of the Netherlands islands which became a separate self-governing entity in 1986, part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is off the shore of Venezuela and has an area of 184 km and had a population of 64,000 in 1991 (53,000 in 1951). There are about 100 Muslims in Aruba, but they are not organized yet.

Bermuda is a British colony in the West Atlantic. It has an area of 54 km and had a population of 61,000 in 1991 (38,000 in 1951). It has a Muslim population of about 200, mostly revert, organized within Masjid Muhammed in Hamilton, the capital. This community was started through the efforts of the African Americans in the early 1970's. Later, a second Mosque was established by the "Islamic Brotherhood of Bermuda" which became in 1994 the "Bermuda Islamic Center". A third Mosque was also established in 1994. The three mosques formed together in 1994 the "Madjlis Asshura of Bermuda" (Islamic Council of Bermuda).

St Kitts and Nevis are British-speaking islands which became an independent state on 22/2/1979. The state has a total area of 259 km and had a population of 46,000 in 1991 (45,000 in 1951). There are about 100 Muslims in this state, and they are not organized.

Cayman is a British colony. It has an area of 253 km and had a population of 26,000 in 1991 (7,000 in 1951). There are about 200 Muslims, but they are not organized.

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) have an area of 152 km and had a population of 17,000 in 1991 (7,000 in 1951). There were about 100 Muslims in 1991. In 1993, They formed the "Islamic Society of BVI" in Tortola. They need a permanent Islamic Center and an Imam.

Montserrat is a British Crown colony. It has an area of 83 km. It had a population of 13,000 in 1991 (14,000 in 1951). There are about 100 Muslims in Montserrat, including students in an off-shore medical

school. They were 12 in 1988, mostly from Middle-Eastern countries. Of the total 100 Muslims, about 25 are foreign Muslims and 75 are local converts, including the first revert in Montserrat, Aisha Allen. The medical students started Friday prayers on campus. Furthermore, the "Voice of Islam" over Radio Antilles, produced in Montserrat, covers all the Caribbean. In 1993, the "Islamic Society of Montserrat" (ISM) was established and rented an apartment which it uses as an Islamic Center. The ISM Secretary is Jamaal Abdul-Vakil Jeffers.

The Turks and Caicos Islands are also a British colony. They have a total area of 430 km. Their population was 12,000 in 1991 (7,000 in 1951). There are about 200 Muslims, but they are not organized.

Anguilla is a British colony. It has an area of 91 km and a population of 7,500 in 1991 (5,000 in 1951). There are about 100 Muslims, but they are not organized.

Conclusion

The growth of Islamic presence during the last twenty years, and the emergence of a new Islamic awareness, led to the need of regional cooperation and organization. Three organizations are responding to this need : The "Islamic Missionaries Guild of the Caribbean and South America" (IMG) ; the "Association of Islamic Communities of the Caribbean and Latin America" (AICCLA) ; and the "University of West Indies Islamic Society" (UWIIS).

IMG had the credit of responding first to the need of regional cooperation. It started as a da'wah department in the "Anjuman Sunnatul-Jamaat Association" (ASJA), the main Muslim organization of Trinidad and Tobago. In 1960, it separated to concentrate on the Caribbean region, including neighboring Venezuela. IMG has a secretariate in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad) and an outstanding Islamic center in Caroni (Trinidad). Until 1994, its Secretary General was M.K. Hussein. IMG is represented in most territories of the Caribbean

by the local Muslim organizations. It organizes seminars and short courses in its center for all the region. It invites the leaders of the Muslim communities of the Caribbean in an annual convention to discuss affairs of common interest. It has a monthly magazine called the "Torch of Islam" which includes news on the Muslims of the Caribbean. It also organizes youth camps which have a lasting effect in bringing together the Muslim youth of the entire region.

In 1987, IMG established the "Caribbean Islamic Secretariat" (CIS) following a decision of its 24th Annual International Convention, headquartered in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad). Its Director is M.K. Hosein. In 1992, CIS became more active in its mission of coordination and cooperation among Muslims and Islamic institutions in the Caribbean region through communication and dialogue. CIS established an action plan geared to enhancing da'wah capabilities of the Muslims in the Caribbean by promoting programs in leadership training and planning. It also convenes regional conferences and seminars, and disseminates Islamic books in the region. CIS publishes a journal called "The CIS Newsletter".

AICCLA, established around 1988, acts as a network for all the Muslim communities of the Caribbean. Its secretariate is at Nassau, Bahamas. It runs the Islamic radio at Montserrat. It has a monthly magazine called the "AICCLA Bulletin". It organizes leadership training courses, raises funds for support of new communities, organizes meetings to discuss common problems, such as the one held in Barbados, with the participation of eight Muslim communities of the Caribbean, to "appraise the impact on Muslims in the Caribbean of the events of July 27, 1990 in Trinidad". It produces books, such as "Deeper Roots" by Abdullah Hakim Quick, narrating the historical development of Islam in the Caribbean, as well as video tapes.

UWIIS, established in the late 1980's, has active branches in the campuses of the University of the West Indies, especially in St Augustine, Trinidad, and in Barbados. It has a newsletter called the

"Muslim Student's Voice". UWIIS has an outstanding integrating effect on the future Muslim intelligentsia emerging from the University, and hailing from the entire region. Its action is usually critical of the old generation and dynamic, never apologetic. Many West Indian students embrace Islam due to their contact with UWII at the University while Muslim students gain in Islamic awareness.

Around 1990, a "Caribbean Muslim Support Group of North America" (CMSC) was established in New York City (USA) by West Indian Muslim immigrants to the USA to support Islam in their countries of origin.

Consequently the future of Islam in the Caribbean looks bright. The Muslim community of the region is reasonably well organized. It is establishing its Islamic institutions and improving its social cohesion. In the three countries mentioned in the first category, the Muslim community is becoming a partner in the established civil society, where Islamic festivals are national festivals and Muslims are present in all the decision making process. The Muslim Community of the Caribbean is increasing fast in numbers, through conversion and natural growth, in spite of the continuous emigration of its members (both born Muslims and converts) to North America where they add to the Muslim mosaic of Canada and the USA. However, this emigration has been benefic to the Caribbean Muslims, as it puts them in close contact with the relatively prosperous, dynamic and well educated Muslim Community of North America.

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CHAPTER VI

Islam in Trinidad and Tobago

by
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1 - Introduction

Trinidad and Tobago is a Caribbean Republic made up of two main islands, at about 11 km off the coast of Venezuela. It has an overall area of 5,130 km², including 4,828 km² for Trinidad and 302 km² for Tobago and five smaller islands.

In 1991, the total population was about 1,280,000 people, including about 41% of African origin, 41% of Indian origin, and 18% of mixed and other origins. About 70,000 people of the above total live in Tobago.

Religiously about 62% of the people of Trinidad and Tobago are Christian, 20% are Hindu, whereas 12% are Muslim, i.e., a total of about 154,000 Muslims, most of Indian origin, about 10,000 are of African origin. The greatest majority of these live in Trinidad, only a few hundred Muslims live in Tobago. Official census figures give

much smaller values as shown in Table 1.1 per district. Muslims are more than 10% in the population of Victoria and Casoni.

The capital of the country is Port-of-Spain (70,000 people); the second largest city is San Fernando (40,000 people); the official language is English; it is the language of all the population, including Muslims.

Trinidad and Tobago were conquered by Britain in 1797 from Spain. They received their independence on 31 August 1962.

Clyde Ahmad Winters has derived evidence to support Muslim presence in this part of the world prior even to the voyages of Columbus. He points out as well that Columbus was responsible for bringing in Muslims, since the commander of one of his ships, the "Santa Maria", was a Muslim (1).

However, documentary evidence shows that enslaved Africans were the very first Caribbean Muslims. They held fast to their faith for many years and formed Muslim communities, but Christian European dominance destroyed the Islamic presence. Islam was nonetheless reintroduced into the region in the mid-19th Century with the arrival of an East Indian labor force.

Today, African Trinidadians are returning to Islam, a religion imbedded into the soil from which mosques, schools and organizations have germinated. Muslim citizens of Trinidad and Tobago reside in solace in this homeland, largely through the efforts of their pioneering ancestors. The dignified positions they hold today in the Government, the University and the Judiciary within a plural existence is evidence enough.

Table 1.1 : Muslim in Trinidad and Tobago in Official Censuses (2).

District	1960	1970	1990
Port-of-Spain	1,845	4,474	5,257
San Fernando	2,318	2,076	3,386
Arima	499	479	1,017
St George	11,884	13,870	15,103
Caroni	10,436	12,914	16,680
Nariva/Mayaro	1,799	2,372	2,568
St David/St Andrew	1,781	2,335	2,654
Victoria	14,078	16,957	18,823
St Patrick	5,031	5,696	5,753
Tobago	65	98	163
Total	49,736	58,271	70,404

2 - Establishment of the Muslim Community

The enslaved Africans in Trinidad and Tobago were Mandingos from West African coasts where Muslim empires flourished. Subject to barbaric treatment, these Africans were kidnapped and brought to toil as slaves on sugar plantations in the West Indies. The trend of fetching slaves from West Africa began since 1777 and lasted for an incredibly long 300 year(s?) period. The sections of the African continent from where these souls were torn were the Muslim nations of the Mandingos, the Fula, Susu and the Hausa.

The Europeans have for centuries propagated misleading concepts about the enslaved Africans into their archives, as existing evidence contradicts their "degenerate and shifty" description of the slaves. These African Muslims were instead literate and worthy scholars, many with unmatched integrity.

Robert Madden, one of a group of special magistrates assigned in 1833 to Jamaica, reveals the slaves' educational standing. Their intelligence was manifested in their letters and Madden found them well-versed in the Holy Qur'an, although, they had not seen a copy for their 30 years in captivity. Some of them could argue points supported by adequate Qur'anic citations, and were equally competent in Qur'anic Tafseer (3). They spoke of their ancestors, judges and gold traders, wealthy folk, some of whom went to pilgrimage to Mecca from the environs of Lake Chad. One of the slaves who remembered accompanying his father on trading trips revealed geographic and political information about Islamic centers, unprecedented by European and American standards. (3).

By 1802, 19,709 enslaved Africans lived on Trinidad and Tobago. Although it is believed that most if not all of these slaves were Muslim, actual numbers are difficult to conceive since masters usually changed the names, religions and cultures of their slaves. Furthermore, the Code Noir or French Slave laws required that slaves be raised according to the tenets of the Roman Catholic faith. (4).

Nonetheless, in the early 1800's, Mandingo Muslims formerly captured from Senegal lived in a community in Port-of-Spain, today Trinidad's capital city, under the leadership of Yunus Mohammad Bath, a man who had bought himself out of slavery. Bath, who claimed to have been a Sultan in Gambia, dressed like an Imam and was versed in the Qur'an. Bath represented this economically viable group which was essentially concerned with buying the freedom of Muslim slaves and securing their return to Africa. From all appearances, Bath's group was not crushed psychologically and bore no traces of dehumanization. (5).

Their petitions to William IV were unsuccessful, but in every way demonstrated their intellect. One petition began with "Allahumma Sally Alla Muhammed" (O God Bless Muhammad). Describing themselves as followers of Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah they

continued to say that they did not spend money on liquor as the other slaves did (4). Although these petitions proved futile, a man named Muhammedu Sisei, who was captured in a Gambian war in 1810 and brought to Trinidad six years later, did manage to return to Gambia through England on borrowed capital. (5).

When an 84 old Mandingo, Imam Slamank, was told that he was free but had to serve an apprenticeship, which required learning to "dig cane", a task he had in fact been doing for the past fifty years, he refused to comply. Someone who saw him in prison describes that "he suffered so severely as to be unable to move on the second day of confinement save on all fours like a quadruped". Nevertheless, Slamank announced that if his freedom was achieved he would refuse any compensation for his fifty years of hard labor as he felt certain that the Mandingo group in Port-of-Spain would support him. (5).

A splinter group of Muslims from the British West India Regiment, former warriors of the Napoleonic wars, joined Yunus Mohammad Bath's group in 1826. Others still, clustered in Manzanilla and Turure on Trinidad's eastern coast. Other servicemen clustered in the years 1818 - 1825 on the East Coast and converted the inhabitants of the area to Islam. By 1840, Quare became a predominantly Muslim settlement. But in spite of this first success, Islam did not last long in the area.

The European reaction to anything other than Christianity remained unyielding. The Minister of an Anglican Church in Tacarigua, Trinidad, in one instance depicted his anxiety about these Mandingo Muslims. He complained to the Governor that this group existed without "clerical instruction", and that "many of them are nominally Mohammedans who are under the influence and guidance of five (so-called) Mandingo priests by whom they are instructed in portions of the Koran, one only of this number can write, to whom they seem to look up with great reverence". The Minister's account

concluded with the manner in which he planned to eradicate the heresy. (5).

European colonialism can thus be significantly blamed for diluting and subsequently wiping out Islam within African hearts. The curbing of the African freedom to ensure thriving sugar belts wasn't sufficient for the Europeans who found it essential to eradicate all traces of what they considered "barbaric".

The East Indians who arrived in Trinidad bore testimony to African Muslim presence. Interestingly enough, as late as 1946 an East Indian man recalled that in his youth someone had shown him a copy of the Qur'an in Arabic, given to his father as a gift from a Mandingo Muslim. Today "Mandingo Road" exists in the southern section of Trinidad.

With the abolition of slavery, the sugar plantations in Trinidad and other parts of the west Indies suffered. Europeans looked toward Calcutta to supply the much-needed labor force and decided upon an indentureship system.

Notwithstanding obstacles which thwarted the essence of indentureship such as protests fired by anti-slavery groups who called indentureship slavery in disguise, along with the lack of sufficient wherewithal to finance such a system, on the 30th of May 1845, the first batch, a group of 224 Indian immigrants arrived on these shores to begin replacing African slave labor. This number was a far cry from the initial 5,000 requested, but the indentureship system had begun. Names such as Khan, Causmolle, Furreed, Emambucus, Omrudee, Allar, Muhourun and Faizan, all pointed to Muslim presence.

The "Port-of-Spain Gazette" wrote : "We have much pleasure in announcing the arrival of the long looked-for vessel the Fatel Rozack, 96 days from Calcutta... The general appearance of the people is very healthy". (6).

Whilst "The Trinidad Spectator" declared : "We congratulate our fellow colonists on the event. We are happy to state that they have

arrived in good health, only 5 deaths occurred during the voyage. We trust that those to whom they have been allotted will feel it to be their incumbent duty to render them as comfortable as possible. Humanity dictates this apart from any other consideration". (6).

However, the very dawn of indentureship reeked with iniquity. For instance, during the first five year's, 6,000 men as opposed to 100 women were fetched from India. This imbalance naturally disrupted and damaged family life as 3,000 existing families were left without fathers, the sole breadwinners, the household heads.

Family life for detached individuals now laborers in the West Indies, proved non-existent as its prerequisites had not been catered to. There was no such element as privacy. Moreover, the East Indians could not marry within their traditions. For possibly 100 years, illegal unions (not recognized by the State) bearing illegitimate children haunted these victims whose basic human needs were considered secondary to a thriving sugar industry.

The Indians were misled into signing contracts which reaped precious little privilege. Stipulations manifested that they work for five years, followed by a brief voluntary indentureship, thereafter residence and ultimately, paid passage back to India at the close of ten years. As time progressed and circumstances changed, immigrants desirous of returning home were denied money for passage.

During the indentureship period more than 143,000 East Indians were brought to Trinidad and Tobago roughly 23,600 of which were Muslim (about 16.5% of total). Indian Muslims suffered slave master brutality as their African predecessors did, and faced hostility from African slaves themselves who viewed them essentially as scab laborers.

Hindus with whom Muslims had shared similar journey experiences from India, and with whom Muslims felt close bounds, now emphatically referred to them as "Mandingas", a corrupt version of "Mandingo", a term possessing cruel insinuations but one which

ironically manifests that both Indian and African Muslims existed under one and the same Islam. When the indentureship ended, the majority of Indian Muslims opted to reside in Trinidad and Tobago rather than journey back to India.

East Indian Muslims were still in a better position to practice and perpetuate Islam than the enslaved Africans, although after the first "Id-al-Fitr" prayer held on the Palmiste Estate in South Trinidad, Muslim devotees were flogged. Yet still, Indian Muslims in Trinidad were more fortunate than Muslims in other parts of the Caribbean because of their strength in numbers.

During the 1800's, an English resident in Trinidad observed : "with regard to the first duty of prayer, and in fact, all the duties, Musulmans in Trinidad soon grow lax and careless, but I have nevertheless frequently seen on a estate, a devout follower of the Prophet leave his work to face the rising sun, profoundly salaam, utter his formula and then proceed with his labor as though no interruption had occurred". (5).

3 - Establishment of Islamic Institutions

Islam was kept alive primarily through congregating on evenings for prayer. Humble mosques, essentially mud walls and thatched roofs, were erected and so jamaats led by Imams sprung up throughout the island. Attached to the mosques were sheds, referred to at the time as "Cowshed Schools" where mакtab classes were held. The locals of each district were responsible for up-keeping the mosque, Imam and Maktabs financially. These classes lacked proper curricula and trained teachers, but were nevertheless responsible for the perpetuation of Islam in Trinidad and Tobago until today, and for the modern day Muslim's ability to read and recite Arabic.

John Morton's associate, K. J. Grant also noticed : "The followers of Mohammed are not ashamed to declare their faith or offer their

prayers wherever they may be. Vividly before my mind is the picture of a company of twelve or fifteen men, who had met together for prayer... The scene was most impressive and yet it could be witnessed every Friday wherever there was a Mohammedan group". (5).

Christian missionaries endeavored to break the Islamic spirit but fared badly. Reverend John Morton 1868 writings reveal : "They (Muslims) oppose bitterly any message that would weaken the claims of Mohamed ; for this reason they are more unwilling listeners to the Christian missionary than even the idolatrous Hindoo". (6).

The zealous Muslim community depended a great deal on the coming of da'is from India and the Middle East. Both da'is and pioneers kept Islam-consciousness alive within Muslim hearts. Sayyad Abdul Aziz from Afganistan, one of the very first pioneers, was initially an indentured laborer in 1883. When his freedom was achieved, he founded the East Indian Association which he headed from 1893 until his death.

Abdul Aziz assisted in erecting mosques and his dedication to the Muslim community led to his being named Qadi in 1907. In this capacity, he realised two dreams for the Muslims of Trinidad : the recognition of Muslim marriages and the unification in 1926 of a majority of the colony's Muslims within "The Tackveeyatul Islamic Association" (TIA, Society for the Strengthening of Islam), incorporated by Ordinance 39 of 1931.

Haji Ruknuddeen, already a member of the Chisti Spiritual Order of Sufism at age twenty, arrived in Trinidad from Punjab in 1893. Even at this tender age, he possessed sufficient Islamic knowledge to advise the Muslims. He was one of seventeen immigrants assigned to La Plaisance Estate in La Romain, though he worked part of his indentureship period at the Corinth estate. His ties to the sugar belt were lifted through the kind help of Imam Imdad Hosein from Victoria Village who helped him purchase his freedom. Haji

Ruknuddeen married the Imam's daughter. At Victoria masjid, he pointed out that the worshippers were facing West instead of East.

He earned his livelihood by tailoring from his residence in Tunapuna on the Eastern Main Road. Under his vibrant leadership a number of jamaats and maktabs were formed in north Trinidad and small schools were set up in the villages. He became father of seven daughters and three sons, with whom he lived under strict observance of the Qur'an and Hadith. In the early 1920's he performed Hajj and in 1935 was one of the industrious leaders of "The Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association" (ASJA). He was appointed Qadi and then Skeikh-ul-Islam.

At the first Parliamentary meeting following Haji Ruknuddeen's death, Dr. Patrick Solomon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs declared that : "Government was deeply saddened at the death of the great religious leader who had left behind him a memory of service not only to Muslims but of the entire country". (7).

The late Haji Muhammad Yussuf Francis Saheb with whose passing in 1993 Trinidad and Tobago suffered perhaps its greatest loss, referred to Haji Ruknuddeen as an "Encyclopedia of the Shariah".

In 1914 Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago experienced a resurgence in Islam through the arrival of Moulvi Haj Sufi Sheikh Muhammad Hasan Hanafi Qaderi from India. He enforced close observance of Islamic law and practices such as strict Hijab and the importance of men growing beards.

Moulvi Fazal Karim Khan Durani came in the 1920's but caused conflict amongst the Muslims since he advocated that Mirza Ghulam Ahmed came as a prophet after Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace). This Ahmadiyya Movement is often called Qadiyanī as it began in the town of Qadiyan in East Punjab.

Some Trinidadian Muslims adhered to such controversial teachings but leaders like Sayad Abdul Aziz refuted them. Before Durani

departed from Trinidad, he influenced Ameer Ali of Siparia to attended an Ahmadi Institute in Lahore.

Ameer Ali returned to Trinidad in the 1930's and prolonged Ahmadi teachings. Massive controversy erupted inside TIA, the sole Muslim organization at the time. On account of this, people broke away from TIA and under Haji Ruknuddeen, formed ASJA.

Ameer Ali was then elected as President for life of TIA, but as the Muslims became more aware of the Ahmadiyat, he was outvoted in 1947. Ameer Ali's supporters challenged the authenticity of this in the civil court. To resolve the situation, the El Socorro property (first Muslim school) was given to those opposed to Ameer Ali whilst his supporters were pacified with a parcel of land in St Joseph where the "Trinidad Muslim League" (TML) was later established in the year 1954.

Maulana Nasser Ahmed Simab journeyed from Lahore to Trinidad in 1936. He left a mere two years later but subsequently returned to Trinidad and founded the "Tabligh-ul-Islam" (For the propagation of Islam through education). Upon his death a small group of followers merged with TIA.

The 1950 visit of Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and his secretary, Hafiz Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahaman Ansari, revitalized the Muslim community. To date people speak of the changes in their lifestyles spearheaded by such powerful Islamic influence.

Apart from religious education which pioneers and dā'is perpetuated, the need for secular education for Muslims was equally essential so that Muslims could find themselves a comfortable spot in a plural society.

In 1851, Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad recognised the need for primary schools and issued proposals for Ward schools. When this system came into effect, East Indian parents still never sent their children to school. Schools were situated very far from the estates where they worked and lived, and both Government and plantation

owners appeared unruffled about East Indian children not attending school. East Indian parents also deeply feared the religious conversion of their children.

In the 1860's the Presbyterian Synod of Canada sent a group of missionaries to Trinidad. Major opinion suggests that the Canadian Missionary contribution to education was done with the hope of converting the East Indians out of Islam and Hinduism. Evidence of this can be found in the pages of the diary of one of the missionaries, Dr. John Morton, who wrote : "This keen chilly wave from Hindusthan was an adverse influence which has to be met and dealt with". (5).

Dr. John Morton also reflected on the initial stages of schooling : "When we arrived in Trinidad, Hindi was an unknown tongue to us and English to the East Indians... The children came about as curious as monkeys, so we began with them O-X OX, C-A-T CAT and so on. Then came slates and pencils and later paper and ink, till some of them could write their own names and proudly show this to their friends... So we taught the children for nearly a year and they helped us to speak Urdu and Hindi".

Recommendations of the Keenan Report in 1869 was the beginning in securing a dual education system and more schools were introduced for the East Indian population. In 1870 an educational ordinance recognized both state-run and denominational schools. A step in the right direction, this spurred Dr. Morton into foreseeing the possibility for better East Indian education. With the help of K.J. Grant, the end of 1873 saw the erection of twelve more schools in Esperanza, San Fernando, Marabella, Union, Wellington, Phillipine, Serville, Gordon Hill, Exchange, Palmyra, Picton Hill and Pointe a Pierre Road. Ten of these schools were maintained by the estates, one by the Canadian Missionaries and one by the Government. The children who attended these schools fell into the eight to ten year age group and had never seen the inside of a school before.

The year 1889 heralded the presence of 31 such schools through the Canadian Missionaries. In Dr. Morton's writings he quotes Governor Robinson, (Governor from 1881 to 1891) as saying : "Considering how much the Indians have done to develop the resources of this colony, the provisions for educational advantages for their children is a duty which Government and their employees owe to them and from which there is no escape". (8).

The Canadian Missionaries also provided a Teacher Training College, religious schools in addition to secondary schools such as the Naparima College for Boys, the 1ère High School and the St Augustine Girls' High School. Vocational schools were introduced for East Indian girls who were largely absent in the primary schools. Suffice it to say that the attendance in these vocational schools was not very large. However, instruction in particular skills did allow East Indian women to ease themselves more readily into the wider community.

Although the Canadian Missionaries's service to East Indian education was great, Muslims realized that in areas like Caroni, San Juan, the Penal/Debe districts and St Patrick and Victoria counties, their children had no access to formal education. They also feared that the non-Muslim missionary influence would absorb their progeny. The lack of social mobility also led to some Muslims forsaking Islam in order to gain employment as teachers. The need for denominational schools was sore.

Maulana Nasser Ahmad Simab strongly condoned "Islam via education". He was instrumental in securing the first Muslim school. When he realized that Government's aid was granted to privately run schools that satisfy certain requirements, he established a private, elementary school in 1942. He died, but those rallying around him persisted in the cause, and in 1949, Government aid was granted to the "El Socorro Islamia".

Today there are twenty-six Muslim schools in Trinidad which account for 5% of the overall student population, a small but significant number. TIA has a ratio of 90% Muslims, 10% non-Muslims, the TML ratio is 30% Muslims, 70% non-Muslims and the ASJA ratio is 15% Muslims, 85% non-Muslims. The number of students in Muslim schools in 1993 - 1994 was about 11,030 students, including 5,130 Muslims (46.5% of the total).

The reason for evident non-Muslim presence in Muslim schools rests on the question of school location. Government regulations uphold that no student living within a two-mile radius of the school's location can be refused entry into any Government or Government-assisted school.

The Government provides two-thirds of the cost of constructing all denominational schools. Grants are subsequently supplied to satisfy the cost of repairs and maintenance.

Muslim children attending non-Muslim schools for primary and secondary education today are exempted from Roman Catholic or non-Islamic religious instruction. The vast Islamic permeation in our society incites a keen awareness about Islam in non-Muslim students and Muslim students are now confidently discussing their religious practices. As one Maulana said : "In Trinidad, Muslims have so integrated themselves with peoples of other races and cultures and faiths without losing their identity, that in spite of being a minority group they have not enjoyed minority status, rather, they have enjoyed equality status. (5).

4 - Present Situation of the Muslim Community

Muslims today live in mixed neighborhoods and not in fixed Muslim communities. Although African Muslims came to the islands of Trinidad and Tobago almost one century before Indian Muslims, Indian Muslims currently outnumber African Muslims twenty to one.

Evident in our National Anthem, "Here every creed and race find an equal place", the freedom to practice Islam is manifested in the Constitution. State laws make provision for Muslim marriages, Islamic organizations have been incorporated by law and Government assistance is given to Muslim School Boards. Moreover, Muslims themselves hold meaningful positions in the local Government, the University and the Judiciary.

Kamaluddin Mohammed, Mrs. Muriel Fatima Donawa McDavidson, Haji Sayeed Mohammed (1984), Shaffie Shah and Shamshuddeen Mohammed, all served as Government Ministers of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Hafiza Khan, the second Muslim female along with Donawa McDavidson, was also a member of Parliament. The late Yusuf Jamada was sollicitor general. (9, 10).

M. H. Shah officiated in Federal Parliament whilst Dr. Waffie Muhammad served as Senator and Haji Nizam Mohammed, previously a Member of Parliament, held the distinguished position of Speaker of the House of Representatives from the year 1986 to 1991. Dr. Wahid Ali, President of the Senate for 15 years, ultimately served as Acting President of the Republic on 20 occasions.

Shamshudden Mohammed held the position of Member of Parliament until his death in May 1994. Shahid Hosein and Hanif Mohammed are currently Members of Parliament whilst Asic Hassim, Mumtaz Hosein and Haidar Ali are all Senators. In parliament, out of 31 members, 2 are Muslims. In Government, the only Muslim minister was Shamshuddeen Mohammed.

Currently, two Muslims hold the notable positions of High Court Judges, Justice Shaffie Shah and Justice Clem Razac. Justice Zainool Hosein and Justice Mustapha Ibrahim are Court of Appeal Judges, whilst Gladys Gafoor is a female Judge in the Industrial Court. Muslim magistrates are Nazruddeen Khan, Kelvin Ali and Kamal-o-Deen.

Three former Court of Appeal Judges, Justice George Anthony Eddo, Justice Ralph Narine and Justice Noor Hassan-Ali, now serve Trinidad and Tobago in completely different capacities. Justice Edoo is presently ombudsman, Justice Narine operates privately whilst Justice Hassan-Ali is today President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ever since the 1960's, with the inception of the University of the West Indies, Muslim presence has been as evident as the existence of other religious bodies. Apart from Muslim students who form a significant number of 221 in the total student population, Muslim lecturers and professors have played the role of educators. Presently, there is Senator Haidar Ali in computer science, Dr. Nasser Mustapha (current TML President) in sociology, Dr. I. A. MacDoom in physics, Dr. Haq in agriculture, Professor Nazir Ahmad in soil science and Zaffar Ali, the campus registrar. (11).

Muslim presence at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad is shown in Table 4.1. It shows that the University had 221 Muslim students in 1993 - 1994, or 4.3% of the total 5,191 students (12, 13).

Table 4.1 : Muslim Presence in the University of the West Indies in the Academic Year 1993 – 1994

Faculty	Muslim Students
Agriculture	17
Arts & General St.	33
Education	6
Engineering	47
Medical Sciences	36
Natural Sciences	52
Social Sciences	30
Total	221

The University's Islamic Society emerged in 1969. Having a membership of essentially Muslim students, this body maintains an Islamic presence on the University campus and was voted in 1992 as

one of two most active groups on campus. The group meets weekly for Islamic study sessions, and organizes Jummah Salah with a student representation of about 60. Other activities of the Society are hosting public lectures, annual graduation dinners and displaying Islamic information at the University's library, in particular during the month of Ramadan.

The majority of Muslims in the Government, the Judiciary and University have fulfilled Islamic work, some in the formative years of Muslim institutions and organizations, others today in local Jamaats and at organizational level. Muslim presence in these areas manifests the secure place Muslims have made for themselves, where they have a voice in running the affairs of the country.

The Muslims of Trinidad and Tobago have established about 105 mosques in the country distributed by district as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 : Mosques in Trinidad and Tobago in 1992 (14)

District	Nber of mosques	Muslim Nber 1990 census
Victoria (+SF)	33	22,179
Caroni	26	16,680
St George (+POS & Arima)	18	21,377
St Patrick	12	5,753
Nariva/Mayaro	8	2,568
St Andrew/St David	6	2,654
Tobago	2	163
Total	105	70,404

5 - The Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association (ASJA)

The Anjuman Sunnat-ul-Jamaat Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ASJA), founded in 1933 by Haji Ruknuddeen and Al Haj Maulana Shah Muhammad Hussan, was incorporated in 1935 by an Act of Parliament. Ever since its inception, it stands as the largest Muslim organization in Trinidad and Tobago. (15, 16).

ASJA's creed is "Ahle-s-Sunnat wal Jama'ah" as represented by the four Guided Imams and interpreted by Imam Abu Hanifah. Eighty to eighty five percent of Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago are ASJA affiliated, and the Association represents the Muslim voice nationally. A thirty-two member Central Executive fulfills the Association activities which range from religious and secular education to social service.

ASJA's educational institutions (17, 18) which hold more than three thousand students and employ more than one hundred and sixty teachers, are located at Charleville, Carapichaima, San Fernando, Point Fortin, Barrackpore, Princes Town and Rio Claro. Seven of these offer primary level education and are Government assisted. As recently as January 1993, the Carapichaima School which previously existed as a "shed" adjoining the mosque for as many as forty years, was transformed into a brand-new, modern structure and opened by Prime Minister Patrick Manning. Its up-to-date facilities currently benefit some 720 students.

A brand new Charleville School, another institution that existed within a "shed" for 35 years, has emerged a 1994 reality. The rebuilding of this establishment on another site began on January 1994 and was opened in September 1994. The institution is expected to include a multi-facility complex comprising of a Secondary College for girls, a Technical-Vocational school, an auditorium and playing field. The new Charleville School will serve some 840 students.

ASJA offers secondary level education at the ASJA Boys' College and ASJA Girls' College in San Fernando whilst a private secondary

school for girls, Haji Ruknuddeen Memorial Girls' High School and the Haji Ruknuddeen Pre-School, once located in Tunapuna, are hoped to be rebuilt.

In November 1993, the Prime Minister subsequently declared a new three-story wing at the San Fernando Boys' College open. This project provides modern facilities.

To facilitate tertiary education, ASJA provides scholarships that finance Islamic and other specialized training abroad. Many students have pursued Islamic theology at the Aleemiyah Institute in Karachi, Pakistan, through ASJA.

Presently, 5 students on ASJA scholarships are studying at the Jami-Islamia in Coventry.

Moreover, ASJA is conducting classes in higher Islamic training for adults, refresher courses for Imams and in-training for new Imams. These classes, conducted before at various centres are now to be realized at the Haji Ruknuddeen Institute, a new impressive structure at Tunapuna. This magnificent building financed exclusively by a grant from the Islamic Development Bank of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

In operating 70 mosques of the total 105 which dot Trinidad and Tobago (one in Tobago) the ASJA administration, apart from overseeing a system whereby trained Imams are placed into mosques, ensures that maktabs are run, and communication lines between the co-ordinating body and all mosques remain smooth and open.

ASJA's contribution to local and international Islamic causes was documented from as early as the 1940's when a contribution was made to the Indian Famine Relief Fund. In the 1950's successful legal representation for a Pakistani seaman charged with murder on board of a ship and twenty four Pakistani seamen charged with mutiny was arranged by ASJA.

In the 1960's, ASJA was instrumental in helping the police introduce peace to the Biche area where several fatal shootings had taken place. Raising funds for the less fortunate requiring medical

attention and supplying funds for disaster-striken people is also part of ASJA's function.

Annually, ASJA publishes an Islamic calendar, a time table to guide Muslims during the month of Ramadan and an 'Id al Fitr Magazine. ASJA's newsletter, "An Nabaa" is distributed free of charge and books are published and reprinted as the need arises and the budget allows.

Friday 20th May 1994 saw the birth of the ASJA Cooperative Society and the ASJA Travel Service, located in Tunapuna, well in the vicinity of the Institute of Islamic Studies. These stand as new and innovative additions in the life of any Islamic organization. Two medical clinics in Charlieville and Arima have been recently set up to serve needy Muslims.

The ASJA fourth arm, formally the Trinidad and Tobago Muslim Youth Organization (T&TMYO), now stands as the National Muslims Youth Organization (NMYO). NMYO, which consists of members from most local areas, has conducted in August 1994 its fifth national and annual youth camp, 130 campers in the age bracket of 12 to 25 years took part. Lectures, fund-raising dinners and encouraging Muslim youth towards becoming involved in Islamic activities are just a few of the strong points of NMYO.

The NMYO President attends the monthly Executive meeting of the parent body and receives support from it.

ASJA imports religious literature and makes it available to the public at nominal cost. Apart from the establishment of a reference library at the Haji Ruknuddean Girl' High School, small libraries do exist within many of ASJA's seventy odd mosques. ASJA is financed by its members and some business houses.

As early as 1938, an ASJA women's arm was formed. ASJA Ladies Incorporated was the first Muslim women's group to be established in Trinidad and Tobago. Hajjin Culsum Rajab felt a need for Muslim women to become active participants in Islamic work

since they were not instrumental like their men in Islamic activities. They were simply lookers-on and stand-bys who bore the brunt of meals and refreshments. Hajjin Culsum was certainly broad-minded in her time since she ensured that her daughter was educated in North America.

People in those early days who supported Hajjin Culsum's endeavors were her sisters Khadijah and Sona and individuals like her cousin Mrs. Hefeeza Oli Mohammed from Tacarigua, and Mohmina Hosein. The hassle to become a registered body urged these women to register as an arm of the male organization, which allowed them nonetheless, the liberty of operating separately and making a significant Islamic contribution.

ASJA Ladies was in its formative days not definitely structured and functioned informally. One of the group's first activities, a type of credit-union where individuals who contributed money were entitled to benefits, existed within a system where funds were passed from hand to hand.

However, in the 1940's, some of the more educated members, conscious of the advantages of operating within a disciplined framework, opened their own bank account and working closely with the parent body's constitution, produced their own constitution which to date remains largely unchanged. Roughly two years following their inception, ASJA Ladies Incorporated recognized the need to tackle a project in women's welfare. The concept of shelter for needy women in the community surfaced. Widows, women separated from their husbands, and single females who had no place to stay would find solace and protection in such an institution.

The ASJA Ladies Incorporated purchased a parcel of land in Tunapuna and community support undeniably saw the erection and running of The Widows' Home. Mrs. Oli Mohammed and her husband undertook the construction of a frame for an eight bedroom structure with adequate kitchen facilities. In the meantime, capital began to

accumulate through bazaars and other similar means in the hope of completing the construction. However, Mr and Mrs. Hydarali of Queen's Park West financed the finishing stages of this building and put the new building into the hands of the ASJA Ladies' section. The Home was declared officially open by the Sheikh-ul-Islam at the time, Haji Ruknuddeen.

To secure a place in The Widows' Home, any female, not necessarily Muslim, required a sponsor, an individual in the community whose responsibility, apart from recommending her was partially maintaining her. In the event of her indiscipline her sponsor would be contacted, although such situation never arose. Rules indicated that all females possess medical certificates to ensure good health, so that ailments like tuberculosis so rampant at the time were not an issue.

The Muslim Community contributed (especially through zakat and charity money) to this Home, and women from neighboring areas, such as Tacarigua and Tunapuna, habitually frequented this establishment to ensure that business progressed as usual.

Six women resided in The Widows' Home at any given time as two rooms were used for clinic purposes, although when a qualified nurse for the clinic began to reside on the premises permanently, only five rooms were available for five women. Haji Dr. Yunus Omarali and his wife voluntarily manned the clinic, open to the general public. Here, small operations such as circumcision were performed, and other Muslim doctors worked to support this cause. In 1982, when Dr. Yunus Omarali left these shores to migrate, the situation of the Home was vividly described in the notes of Hajjin Zainab Mohammed, President of the ASJA Ladies. (19) :

"On the departure of Dr. Omar Ali and his wife, who administered the affairs of the Crescent Medical Clinic and incidentally, the ASJA Ladies Section Home for Ladies, known as The Widows' Home and now as The Crescent Home for Ladies, the management of everything

fell squarely upon the shoulders of the ASJA Ladies' Section or more directly the Executive Committee of the Association. As President of the Association, and working directly opposite the Home, as Principal of the Haji Ruknuddeen Girls' High School, I found myself saddled, almost solely, with the responsibility of administering everything".

"After the donation of the equipment of the Medical Clinic to "Servol" there remained only "The Home for Ladies". As the administration was now considerably lessened, we did not find it necessary to have another body administering the Home, deciding that it would be the combined responsibility of the Ladies' Section of ASJA Inc, or as afore mentioned, its Executive Committee. But, as before, through my proximity to the Home, I still found myself almost solely involved".

"Administering the Home was a many sided affair. This is not the place to dilate upon the different aspects. But one special aspect should be accounted for. That is the financial aspect. Since there was no one person responsible, I again found myself involved. There was no special fond for the Home, nor any regular source of income. We depended on the finances of the association or the occasional private donation, one of which was 60 annually (5 per month) from Hajjin Nasiran Hosein of Cotton Hill, Port-of-Spain. This could hardly cover the electricity bill. There were land rates and water rates, the cleaning of the premises which kept increasing as the cost of labor increased, the frequent plumbing bills, both to private persons and to WASA (The Water and Sewerage Authority). There were the occasional repair jobs as e.g. broken window panes. On one occasion the whole building had to be rewired and, on another, a retaining wall had to be erected on one side of the building to keep out flood waters from the rooms of the inmates. Thanks for the last two projects must be recorded to the local boys of the T&TMYO who did them free of cost to the Association".

Dr. Muhammad Ali Kazim filled Dr. Omar Ali's place until he migrated as well. Thereafter, no support equal to Dr. Omar Ali's was received. As Hajjin Zainab's above report states, the clinic equipment was donated to SERVOL, a non-Muslim group who pledged service to the community.

In its state of disrepair, The Crescent Home was not open to new members and the dilapidated building was soon on the verge of collapse. ASJA Ladies Inc has always been keen on rebuilding this structure on the same spot. Since the spot in question was needed for the recently built Institute of Islamic Studies, the parent body has given the women's arm another parcel of land in Central Trinidad. Plans for another women's home, or more specifically a centre, are currently underway. Apart from catering to women's welfare, this centre will function as a venue for meetings, seminars, bazaars and camps.

Throughout the years, ASJA ladies Inc has been active in running Islamic, craft and cookery classes and camps, particularly for women, and observing occasions such as Meeladun-Nabi, Meeraj-un-Nabi, and Ashura. Reading of the Qur'an when Muslims in the community have passed on is a routine practice.

From time to time ASJA Ladies has offered scholarships and screened suitable individuals for acceptance. Liaising with both non-Muslim and Muslim women groups has been crucial to their existence since the conclusion is that as women they all possess similar interests and goals. Keeping closely associated with Government parliamentarians and paying visits to female prison inmates to give them words of consolation and satisfy their personal needs is all in a day's work.

A vibrant young women's group was formed and a representative, Mehrun Nisa Ali, was even sent to Iran as a youth representative. Over the years, those members became old enough to join ASJA Ladies Inc. Today a youth arm has been formed, an indication that

another generation of youth has realized the importance of Islamic work. Suffice it to say that other Muslim women only began their groups in 1970's onwards.

6 - Other Islamic Organizations (20)

Trinidad Muslim League (TML)

The Trinidad Muslim League (TML) is Ghair Muqallid, that is to say its members do not conform to any of the four schools of thought. The group was founded by a trainee of a Qadiani institute in Lahore. However its current members have claimed to have severed ties with Qadianis. TML operates five schools, three primary located in St Joseph, Rio Claro and San Fernando and a secondary school and kindergarten in operation at the St Joseph site. Recently, TML has put up a small building for the purpose of archives and is now in the process of collecting documents and artifacts to enhance its collection; (21).

Tackveeyatul Islam Association (TIA)

The Tackveeyatul Islam Association (TIA) owns and operates five government assisted primary schools in El Socorro, Aranguez, Lengua, Warrenville and Five Rivers. The Government assists with teachers' salaries as well. TIA is also responsible for four mosques located at Bamboo Settlement Valsyn, Charlie Village, Freeport and Lengua Prince's Town.

The Islamic Missionaries Guild of South America and the Caribbean (IMG)

The Islamic Missionaries Guild of South America and the Caribbean (IMG) was founded in 1960 by Maulana Fazlu-Rahman Ansari. Islamic activity began in 1962. In 1965, IMG emerged as a regional organization with branches and affiliates in every English-speaking Caribbean island. IMG owns an impressive Islamic center in Kelly Village in Caroni countryside. Countries such as Guyana, Surinam, Venezuela, Barbados, Jamaica, St Vincent, Grenada,

Dominica, US Virgin Islands, Curacao and Brazil are linked to the IMG. An international convention is held annually, consisting of members representing their peculiar region.

Publisher of The Torch of Islam, IMG's bookshop comprises books from Pakistan, USA, India and the Middle East, available at nominal prices. IMG operates a library donated in 1969 by the Egyptian Government.

IMG has facilitated student instruction at the Aleemiyah Institute in Pakistan, Azhar University in Cairo and the Madina University in Saudi Arabia. Renowned for its youth camp held annually for the duration of Christmas holidays, IMG also runs similar youth camps during the year with the chief purpose of training youngsters in Islamic ibadat and leadership.

The Islamic Trust

Registered as a charity organization in 1975, the Islamic Trust publishes The Muslim Standard a comprehensive newsletter that highlights issues concerning Muslims as well as social, political and national problems facing the wider community with possible solutions for them. Members meet regularly for Islamic study circles. The Islamic Trust began the Muslim Credit Union, a non-riba economic system for Muslims. Their youth brigade is responsible for Islamic conventions and the translating of Islamic books.

The Muslim Credit Union

The Muslim Credit Union (MCU) was born in 1983 to help Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago financially (22, 23). A group of Muslims who felt strongly about the interest system which banks implement, formed MCU. Legally registered on 18th November 1983, MCU represents the first socio-economic venture for Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago designed to improve the economic welfare of its members. Its committees manage investment, zakah, shariah advisory and arbitration.

MCU is primarily concerned with encouraging its members to save. Purchasing shares in MCU encourages thrift and also act as security for interest-free loans or for financing self-made businesses. Members have the option of opening their own savings accounts with easy withdrawal facility. Interest-free loans are also available and repayment terms are structured with heavy emphasis on the individual's ability to repay.

MCU purchases certain commodities to resell so that items are sold minus interest. The price is therefore better and repayment terms depend on individual's financial status. Every member is entitled to a Discount Card which guarantees discounted prices at certain businesses nationally.

MCU has established a Masjid Revolving Fund as well. Substantiated by donations from individuals, jamaats, companies and organizations, this Fund is essentially for renovating or extending mosques.

Perhaps the most important service that MCU renders is handling zakah. A dependable method exists whereby zakah is collected and distributed to needy Muslims. Consultation on calculating zakah, the drawing up of wills as well as the distribution of inheritance in accordance with the shariah is available.

Two types of financial returns which exist are the dividend and patronage refund. Profits are distributed amongst members and patronage refunds are paid to members depending on their use of the co-operative services. The good news is that in 1982, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago made the purchasing of shares in credit unions tax deductible.

MCU also employs eighteen people in their two offices and printery. Through formal and non-formal methods, individuals are trained in specific skills and MCU members enjoy a strong sense of Islamic identity. MCU strives to improve Islamic education through

lectures, seminars and in-house training. Publishing the Muslim Co-op News keeps Muslims aware of their options.

Islamic Funeral Services Trust

Registered in 1984, the Islamic Funeral Services Trust provides the Muslim Community with Islamic funeral services. A small fee is charged for a funeral but for economically disadvantaged Muslims, funerals are free of charge.

Tabligh Jamaat

The main interest of the Tabligh Jamaat is reformation of individuals. Members visit people's houses and mosques to teach. Contact has been established with similar organizations in Africa, North America and India. The leader in Trinidad and Tobago is Mufti Shabil Ali.

Darul Uloom

The Darul Uloom Trinidad and Tobago (24, 25) is unique in that it offers secondary education and Islamic learning within a single institution. Established in 1984, the Boys' College is located in Cunupia, Trinidad, whilst the Girls' College stands in Don Miguel Road, San Juan, temporarily until better facilities become feasible.

Mufti Shabil Ali is the Principal of this institution, where free religious and secular instruction is combined, although a nominal fee is charged for resident students who are entitled to meals, tuition and board.

According to a 1993 report, there are 80 resident students at the Boys' College and 40 students at the Girls' College. Part-time adult students are currently 425 in number. Darul-Uloom concedes that its monthly expense runs into the vicinity of US \$ 12,000. Since only 25% of its funds is derived from fees from resident students, the remaining 75% is donated. The institution is happy to utilize zakat money for needy students.

The part-time educational programs are tafseer, or commentary of the Holy Qur'an, Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic language and recitation courses in the Holy Qur'an. The full-time five year courses include, English, mathematics, history, geography, general science, biology, social studies, Arabic, Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic history, Qur'anic studies, Hadith studies, intonation and memorization of the Holy Qur'an.

Upon successful completion of the five year courses, an Alim/Alimah course can be taken whilst simultaneously pursuing the Advanced level in secular education. The Department of Islamic Legal Affairs of the Darul-Uloom conducts the Mufti course for Islamic graduates (those who have completed the Alim course).

Abdul Aziz Trust

The sons of the late Abdul-Aziz Kudrat (1952) formed this Trust. Registered in 1978, the Trust operates two medical clinics free of charge, located at Dow Village, California, near their maktab, and Samson Village, Claxton Bay. The Trust is concerned with propagating Islam, providing financial assistance to the needy and visiting hospitalized individuals.

The Islamic Ladies Social and Cultural Association (ILSCA) (The Islamic Academy)

In 1970, a group of women met to discuss the formation of a women's organization to enhance social and community upliftment of Muslims and non-Muslims alike (26, 27). In 1971, headquarters were set up at Valleton Avenue in Maraval, and The Islamic Ladies Social and Cultural Association (ILSCA) was born. Two more branches were established later in San Fernando and Penal.

Apart from promoting Islam, ILSCA has manifested an interest in rendering humanitarian service in Trinidad and Tobago and encouraging art, craft, sport and cultural activities. Funds, crucial for charitable projects, maintaining the institution and carrying out

objectives have been raised largely through fund-raising dinners, tea-parties, bazaars and jumble sales.

From its inception, ILSCA has managed maktab classes nationally, in areas such as Bamboo Settlement, Curepe, Maraval, Woodbrook, Santa Cruz, St Augustine, Valsayn and St Madeline. Classes for adults have also been held in the Valsayn/St Augustine/Curepe area where apart from teaching the reading of the Holy Qur'an, adults have been encouraged to participate in discussions on Islamic topics. Religious education has taken place in the form of lectures and seminars on a wide range of modern day issues such as drug addiction, Muslim youth in Trinidad and Tobago and divorce.

Already in 1974, members of ILSCA journeyed to the sugar belt and supplied boxes of food-stuffs, clothing and financial aid to poor families. In 1977, an application was made to the Board of Inland revenue, Minister of Finance, requesting that ILSCA be granted permission to operate as a charitable body. This dream was achieved just one year later.

On May 5th 1985, new headquarters at No. 4, Queen's Park West were made available to ILSCA under the name "The Islamic Academy" and at this new venue a central maktab began. By 1986 a free medical service was introduced every Sunday from 9 am to 12 noon. In 1987, this service was extended to patients who could not afford the journey into Port-of-Spain. Doctors situated all over the island volunteered to see such patients during their office hours once screened for free medical attention.

In 1987, the male counterparts of this industrious group of women became actively involved in ILSCA. In that year, a large building with spacious grounds and facilities was purchased at No. 3 Rapsey Street as the Islamic Academy's headquarters. In 1993, a second medical service was established in Freeport.

Their sponsorship program which to date consists of 80 families comprises the needy, destitute, the ailing, widows and cripples who

are fed and clothed. In fact ILSCA has now been appointed to work in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Consumer Affairs through which a feeding program is in operation where foodstuff is channeled to an average of 450 people per month.

A van was recently donated by Robert Amar's group of companies which will help reaching out needy families. The Islamic Academy's donations have been furnished to other deserving causes in the form of scientific equipment, kitchen appliances, books and Islamic literature.

In 1988, the Bibi Fatimah Kindergarten was started on the Rapsey Street grounds and is now registered with the Ministry of Education. In September 1991, the Bibi Fatimah Primary School and the Bibi Amina Institute, where academic, vocational and household management skills are taught, were also established. In 1992, a scholarship program began through which 22 students have attended The University of the West Indies and the Darul-Uloom. The financial assistance in the way of scholarships has reached a total of TT 79,000.

In 1992, a Family Life Bureau was formed to look after the Muslim Community's pressing needs regarding family life. Premarital counseling and marriage guidance have been instituted at regional levels. A youth arm of this Bureau enhanced the work and social life of the Islamic Academy, since its inception.

Muslim world League (MWL)

The Muslim World League (MWL) or Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami is an international non-governmental organization with international representation. The branch in Trinidad under the leadership of Dr. Waffie Muhammad is just one of the twenty-seven branches whose secretariat general is based in the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia (28).

In this country, MWL endeavors to fulfill the same functions as all MWL branches which can be summarized as follows: educating people in Islam, refuting anti-Islamic allegations, whatever is

Islamically incorrect and promoting Islamic concerns. It acknowledges all four Sunni Islamic schools of thought.

MWL in Trinidad is specifically oriented towards educating Muslims about Islam with a keenness on bringing Muslims together. It prefers to work through existing organizations. However, it professes not to get itself involved within the problems of other organizations.

Ensuring that the Government has a better understanding of Islam is also a MWL priority. Maintaining good relations with the Government helps in the preservation of Islam and ensures better facilities and thus welfare for Muslims. This fostering of good relations creates a forum for solving problems from a different point of view since dialogue is encouraged between Muslims and the Government.

MWL's Da'wah work is quite extensive. Refresher courses for Imams have been conducted, qualified Imams have been placed into masjids, conferences for all Islamic organizations have been hosted as well as public lectures and seminars. MWL is responsible for the distribution of copies of the Holy Qur'an nationwide and produces and circulates vast publications. MWL provides Muslims with financial grants for constructing and maintaining schools and mosques. In accordance with its budget, scholarships and teachers' salaries are paid.

The Islamic Home For Children

The Islamic Home for Children (IHC) which currently provides shelter and security for 23 children, was founded in 1989 by Maulana Shafayat Mohammed. It began with six children, three girls and three boys. Originally, plans for this two storey structure with a temple shaped building at its side (now used as a mosque) were intended for a sports and service league, but in 1990, IHC was established to provide protection for abused and homeless children (29).

Children in IHC are the products of separated or divorced parents who are financially unable to cater to their children's needs, and one

instance exists where a spouse has refused to take care of children not her own. Some of these children who were abandoned arrived with neither birth nor vaccination certificates and never attended school before. Others still are victims of sexual abuse or drug-addicted parents. Therefore, IHC cannot be called an orphanage since roughly 90% of the children have either one if not both parents alive.

Before children could gain entry into IHC, they have to be selected by a committee who investigates the children's circumstances to decide if they qualify for entry. The children are then adopted through the courts in the hope that by the age of sixteen, they will be reunited with their family or adopted by another family.

42% of these children are Muslim, 26% Hindu and 31% are Christian, although the administration and thus religious instruction is essentially Islamic. The smaller children attend a kindergarten, the Hindus attend a Hindu school in the vicinity, whilst the Muslim children attend a Muslim school in another town. Although some of the children arrived to IHC without previous education, their school reports bear testimony to the extra lessons that IHC provides.

A small garden where tomatoes and hot and sweet peppers are grown is one of the projects the children tackle in their spare time. A set of swings, see-saws and slides which form a play-ground donated by a private company, lends the opportunity for diversion. The children also help with the care of two dogs, three chickens a parrot and aquarium fish.

Committees in charge of admission, religion, physical maintenance, planning, IHC personnel and friends, public relations, education and health, all function coherently. A house mother and house father, a couple with three children are representative of parents since they reside with their offspring on these facilities permanently. Two maids clean, mend, sew, iron and launder whilst another assists in the evening with especially the younger children. A guard, an

administrator, dieticians and social workers all form part of this working group.

HIC expenses run into areas such as food, clothing, medicine, health care and school fees, and are met by donations and basically two fund raising activities, an annual dinner and fair. Individuals also donate their services, a dentist, a doctor, religious people, hairdressers and teachers offer specialized assistance. It is noteworthy that during the month of Ramadan, overwhelming donations from the Muslim Community lead to less IHC expense. IHC hopes to be incorporated by February of 1994.

The Islamic Home For Aged, Poor and Orphans

Located on Hindustan Road in New Grant, the Islamic Home For Aged, Poor and Orphans, which currently houses 25 people has been in existence for many years although presently mainly elderly folk reside there. Harol Ojir manages the establishment where all residents operate on a self-help basis. The Home is ideally situated on grounds where fresh air and exercise is within easy grasp of the elderly. Ojir also runs a medical facility and mortuary for charity purposes (30).

Masjid Al-Taubah Tobago

The 163 Muslims who live on the island of Tobago have changed the name of the Tobago Muslim Association to "Masjid al-Tawbah, Tobago" since the erection of their new mosque (31). The enslaved African Muslims of Tobago lost their faith many years ago as they were converted to Christianity. The Muslims in Tobago today are originally Trinidadians who chose to migrate to the sister island roughly twenty to thirty years ago. However, Islam is setting its roots firmly into this small island since although in the minority, born Tobagonians are reverting to Islam now.

7 – Coordination Between Muslim Organizations

In 1990, the major Muslim organizations of Trinidad and Tobago established the Muslim Coordinating Council (MCC), a group comprising ASJA, TML and TIA. MCC at the time insisted on certain prerequisites that an organization had to fulfill, such as becoming Government incorporated and running its own schools with Government aid.

Organizations which did not fulfill the above conditions formed the United Islamic Organization (UIO). The preamble contained in a "Memorandum of Understanding of the United Islamic Organizations of Trinidad and Tobago" (32) is one declaration from the Holy Qu'ran which is as follows : "O ye who believe... Die not except as Muslims. And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah and do not be separate".

UIO was created to fill a crucial need as it was recognized that a unified approach was synonymous to service to Muslims and in fact the wider community. The main idea was, in delivering the message of Islam, all Muslim bodies can function jointly in their activities within a trusting environment.

UIO also views itself as a link between the Muslims and national and international bodies. It feels strongly about showing non-Muslims true Islam. With an organizational structure of a General Assembly, an Administrative Committee along with working committees, the membership is granted to Muslim organizations which follow the "Ahles Sunnah wal Jama'ah" but not those whose activities are confined to specific racial or sectarian interests. Observer status is granted to them with participation in the UIO's activities but with no voting rights.

Quite recently, UIO and MCC began interacting. Trinidadian Muslims are realizing that they are working within organizations for

the sake of Allah. Previous "power struggles" where organizations formerly "competed" are almost non-existent now.

The multivarious Islamic organizations are not cause for dissension, since all Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago try to coordinate their efforts towards common goals. Today, people attend and support each other's endeavors, and irrespective of organizational background common interests are evident.

More organizations are formed everyday, yet this is a good sign since Muslims are becoming aware of each Muslim's duty to protect, promote and propagate Islam. Surely, forming an organization makes such achievements more feasible.

The good news is that many long-standing organizations are currently re-examining their activities, and such re-thinking is proof of a better tomorrow. The concept of Ihsan (the improvement, the better performance, the striving for excellence, is thus making way inside Islamic organizations and so, within the Muslim community. Proof of this was seen on the 2 th of March 1994, when both MCC and UIO joined hands for an 'Id-ul-Fitr celebration at Skinner Park in San Fernando, an event where roughly 12,000 Muslims came united under the theme "Many Families, one Ummah".

8 - Social Situation of the Muslim Community

Tertiary Education

Muslims of both sexes have pursued secular education up to varying degrees. At the beginning, some did not even attain the primary level, but eventually, most acquired primary and secondary levels. An increasing number of Muslim males and females are completing tertiary education at the University of the West Indies and also at renowned universities abroad.

Muslims contribute to the professional world of medicine, accountancy, law, business and education. Many Muslims still exist within similar livelihood practices of their ancestors. Some are involved in cane, rice and vegetable farming, others in shop keeping, animal husbandry and butchering.

It is difficult to speak about Muslim financial status other than generally. Indian Muslims have been more successful economically than African Muslims since Islam has appealed to the poor, disadvantaged Africans but not the wealthy ones. However, amongst the Indian Muslims, there are the very wealthy ones, those that live comfortably yet not lavishly and still, as in every community, those that qualify for zakat.

However, as equality is intrinsic in Islam, stratification is absent in our Muslim society. Irrespective of wealth or poverty, Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago have always considered themselves on the same level and co-exist harmoniously.

Freedom of Expression

In the 1960's, the very first attempt at Islamic broadcasting was the IMG brainchild spearheaded by Muhammad Kamaruddeen Hosein and Yusuf Mitchell. No funds were in sight even at the outset to facilitate each seventy-five dollar half-hour radio program at "Radio Trinidad. However, like every Islamic effort, this attempt at propagating Islam did manage to start. A senior Muslim woman made a donation, enough to run the first broadcast.

These bulletins comprised issues facing the Muslim Community in Trinidad and the Caribbean. The programs were well received although non-Muslims belonging to the radio station began issuing such threats that if the Muslims didn't stop attacking Hosay (a national mockery of the Battle of Kerbala) they would be taken off the air.

For many years during the month of Ramadan, the Muslim Community has performed da'wah via radio and television and for the

occasion of 'Id-ul-Fitr and 'Id-ul-Adha, programs put together by Muslims and the media alike filter through the television screen.

Today, six Islamic programs are transmitted weekly via radio, hosted by different Muslim organizations and sponsored by Muslim businessmen. They comprise the recitation of the Holy Qur'an with translation, Islamic propagation and songs.

Through non-Muslim publishing houses Muslims have the opportunity to voice their issues in the daily newspapers. Muslim letters to newspaper editors are almost always published although articles written by Muslims, like most articles submitted to any medium, seldom appear unedited, and those submissions that appear in original form are in most cases paid for.

The only medium that Muslims own is "Iqra Productions", founded by Fazila Khan and Zabar Baksh and incorporated in 1988. From December 1987 until 1991, "Focus on Islam", a half-hour projection on Islam was aired every Saturday morning through electronic media. Muslims from various organizations merged to produce scripts. Donations from mainly Muslim businessmen whose business advertisements supplied the necessary funds of 3,000 per program led to a resounding success.

At the outset, "Focus on Islam" was taped through "Trinidad and Tobago Television", a non-Muslim media house. However, as funds accumulated, Muslims were able to purchase their own equipment and establish their own studio at a Muslim's home. The television broadcasts have ceased momentarily through a lack of adequate wherewithal to continue financing such a dynamic piece of work. Full-time human participation is required, but the Muslims who have come forward can only volunteer part-time assistance and so all goals cannot be readily achieved. However, Iqra Productions is still active today. Recording senior citizens who tell the tale of Islamic history in Trinidad and Tobago is one project this group is tackling apart from

others. The members still meet on a weekly basis. They all hope that someday "Focus on Islam" will be back on the air.

One renowned group of Indian Muslims have a monopoly on Indian radio and television programming in Trinidad and Tobago, but their contribution is primarily for the purpose of Indian culture. Though their programs sometimes commence with a Qur'anic verse, their energies are essentially targeted at Indians and they are responsible for fostering integration between Muslims and Hindus. At such a vantage point, it is unfortunate that their main concern is not promoting Islam.

Women

As East Indian children, particularly females, acquired secular education a long while after it was introduced, the Muslim woman's primary contribution to the wider community was lodged through her methods of cooking and dressing. Dishes she prepared from her native land, such as curried chicken and dhal pourrie, have become West Indian foods. Quality Indian cuisine is now produced by many non-Indians.

Many Muslim women still wear Indian clothes. Interestingly enough, the very concept of trousers for women in the West originated from the Muslim woman's " shalwar" outfit. The modern "dhoti" and "pellazo" trousers bear striking resemblance to Indian clothing. In turn, Muslim women adopted Western wear, altering it to their religious scruples, i.e., ensuring that it covered every part of her except her hands, face and feet.

Some of the first Muslim women who took jobs outside home abandoned Muslim dress in preference of Western style. However, recently Muslim women's dress-consciousness reappeared and so their identity is now better established. Our society respects Islamic dress, which is evident in its presence at schools, universities and workplaces. Unfortunately, the school term of September 1994 has

brought with it a "hijab controversy". Muslim organizations are feverishly meeting with the government and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association to enable young Muslim girls to garb themselves modestly.

Muslim women have secured tertiary education and form integral pieces of the professional picture of Trinidad and Tobago. They merge today with the rest of society, equally educated and confident yet clad modestly, therefore retaining Islamic dignity.

Marriage and Polygamy

Muslim parents in Trinidad and Tobago arranged marriages for their children for years, until around 1958. As a traditional practice, the couple met when negotiations were well under way or perhaps concluded. In all cases, because consent is essential in a Muslim marriage, all prospective marriage partners have had to make the ultimate choice.

At the end of World War Two, the Muslims of Trinidad and Tobago became more educated about the world around them, and such habits changed. The concept of love, emphasized in American society, also passed on to West Indian society. Today, potential mates are selected without intermediaries.

The meeting of single Muslims changed, but pre-marital sex is still considered un-Islamic and young Muslims of the opposite sex meet within a family setting. Since so many young Muslim women wear hijab, which represents much more than a head-covering, chastity is still overwhelmingly crucial, although the more enlightened couples of today wish to discuss various topics together. In previous times, after the wedding, the newly married couple began living in their home at once but with changing times, Muslim couples, like most modern couples take a "honeymoon".

In the past, marriage between Indian partners led to the extended family where the married couple lived either with parents, and other close family members or both. In such a situation, the Muslim woman

has to adapt to rules already established for the household, and so conflict surfaced. When both marriage partners secured jobs which afforded them their own home, the nuclear family was born. The Muslim woman can now make the choices for her household. Her relationship with her in-laws and her husband's relationship with her family has thus much improved.

Perhaps, the lack of stratification in the Muslim society is most evident in Muslim marriage since it is the norm for wealthy Muslim parents to consent to their daughters marrying into poor families, once husbands bear good characters and practice Islam.

Up to 1963 the dowry never exceeded TT 250. Today the dowry has increased by leaps and bounds, but it is of course still dependant on the husband's financial status. Members of The Jamaat al Muslimeen practice polygamy. The number of Indian Muslim polygamous families has slightly increased.

Divorce

While the Muslim Divorce Court (MDC), established in 1961, functions smoothly in handling counseling and the actual divorce, ancillary relief such as maintenance, custody and property settlement is handled at High Court level in accordance with civil law. Whether Muslim males conform to the Islamic maintenance requirements or not, depends largely on the extent to which they follow Islamic guidelines.

MDC handles about twenty divorces per month, but the Court concedes that 90% of these failed marriages are mixed marriages where Muslims who have married non-Muslims face incompatibility. Abuse from alcoholics or drug-addicts is one reason women request divorce. In fact however both Muslim men and women request divorce.

MDC consists of a chairman, a lawyer advocating the Trinidadian law, a secretary who files the divorce and two board members who maintain the Islamic point of view. Although Muslim women do not

constitute MDC (but this is on the brink of being changed), they do appear as lawyers representing one of the persons requesting divorce.

Counseling is available at MDC, and since three months precedes the final divorce, a time frame is feasible for such advice which is fulfilled by religious leaders and Muslim marriage officers, often the very officer who officiated at the couple's wedding. The benefit of counseling is manifested in a change of heart between formerly conflicting marriage partners.

Muslim society treats the divorced Muslim with gentle sympathy, since the dissolution of marriage happened as a result of trying possibly unlivable circumstances. The fact that the majority of divorced Muslims remarry, show that they still wish for the purity and security the institution of marriage provides.

Social Problems

Naturally, social problems carry part of the blame for broken homes and realistically, un-Islamic practices abound in Trinidad and Tobago. Indiscriminate mixing, alcohol consumption, drug abuse, nakedness and criminal behavior are evident. Muslims commuting to work, school or even mosques are faced with erotic behavior. Yet the religious consciousness of Muslims has increased. Instead of pretending that immorality does not exist, Muslims have individually and at organizational level, adopted the middle course. They ensure that their voices are heard on all controversial matters and stay away from evil practices.

Some of these social problems do find their way into the lives of Muslim families as they do for other families, although no statistics have shown that these problems are more evident in Muslim families. Muslim parents are alarmed about the goings-on in the wider community more so with the influential impact on the youth. The struggle to keep some of the youth from illicit behavior remains an uphill one. But today, the existence of so many Muslim organizations keep the majority of the youth busy. Many Muslims are searching for

and thankfully discovering alternative forms of diversion for the younger generation.

9 - Genesis of the African Muslim Community

African nationals who embrace Islam today, believe they are returning to Islam. For some of them, "returning" means going back to the religion of their ancestors, to others, "returning" to the religion to which they were born.

Yusuf Mitchell (33), retired architect, is one of the first African Muslims in Trinidad to embrace Islam. He returned to Islam in 1950 under Maulana Abdul-Aleem Siddiqui, a dynamic Pakistani da'i. He spoke about his disillusionment, actually disgust with life at the early age of twenty-three. With great emotion but simplicity he recounts the moving story of his conversion. One night, as he passed the Jama Masjid, a mosque nestled in the heart of the humming city of Port-of-Spain, which Mitchell formerly regarded as an "Indian Temple" or "Indian Church", (phrases that emphasize that the Muslim Community in Trinidad and Tobago up to that time was almost entirely Indian), he paused as Maulana Abdul-Aleem Siddiqui lectured. It was then that truth dawned on Yusuf Mitchell. This Islam belonged to everyone, every race in the world. He followed Maulana Siddiqui for months, from mosque to mosque, for lectures during which time he took shahadah. He describes this period as the most beautiful turning point in his life and declares that Islam had become such a part of his blood that nothing could have turned him back.

Vividly remembering the late Muhammad Ibrahim, an Indian Muslim who fostered him under his wing, a man who worked unconditionally for Allah's cause, Yusuf Mitchell concedes that had it not been for this man he may not be in the position he is in today. Yusuf Mitchell died on October 7, 1994.

Other African Muslims took shahadah. At that time, only five or six Trinidadians were Muslim : Yusuf Mitchell, Muriel Donawa, Mahmood Rasool from Piparo, the late Desi, the late lawyer Plackett and a man by the name of Brown from Laventille.

Indian Muslims were at first skeptical about African Muslims. Lack of Islamic education can certainly be blamed, because a true Islamic spirit warrants racial equality. Indian Muslims felt that Africans were entering Islam to take away their daughters and their funds. Such intense fear sprang from a lack of education. Gradually, with education these tensions faded. Today, more integration is prevalent between Muslims of both races. Although Mitchell hastens to say that racial discrimination never existed in the Muslim Community, he believed that economic discrimination did. Islam has appealed mainly to the poor and not wealthy Africans. Thus, African Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago are undoubtedly disadvantaged. The discrimination from their own families, spurred on by their conversion, causes sometimes eviction from their homes.

Unfortunately no economic machinery exists whereby these African Muslims can become self -sufficient and so many of them revert back to Jahilia. Therefore, within the context of their financial circumstances, some of them are not presented with the opportunity to know the meaning of Islam in its purest sense. This unavailability of jobs, and thus sustenance, causes some newly converted African Muslims to think along "Communist" lines where they believe that what others in the Muslim Community have should also be theirs. Had the Muslim Community established such an avenue where Muslims became financially independent, in their printeries and factories, the Islamic spirit would have been better.

African Muslims do not currently hold positions in the other Islamic organizations, though some attend functions that other Muslim bodies host.

In the 1970's, The Nation of Islam, which later became The World Community of Islam, was led by Elijah Muhammad of the United States. During the 1960's, this internationally renowned group focused on the civil rights movement. One of its main members was Malcolm X. A branch of this group was formed in Lavantille, Trinidad. The appeal of the group was more on race than Islam and many Black freedom fighters joined it. Power struggles led this group to become divided into The Islamic Party, The Jamaat-al-Muslimeen and the Jamaat-al-Mumineen.

The Jamaat Al Muslimeen

Almost all the members of this group are African, a fact however, not intended to restrict Muslims of other races from becoming members. Their leader is Yasin Abu-Bakr, a former Trinidadian police officer who pursued college education in Canada, and reverted to Islam there. On his return, he formed the Jamaat Al-Muslimeen (JM) (34) in 1979 through the merging of Dar Al-Islam Muwahiddin (a splinter group from the Islamic Party of North America) and a group called Ansar-Allah.

JM erected a masjid in Mucarapo on land formelly given to IMG, but later taken away by the Government. A school and members residences are located in the vicinity of the Mosque, built in 1984. Neither Government curriculum nor aid have a place in the school as JM believe that if this were the case, their school might be subject to an un-Islamic curriculum.

In 1982, JM launched its newspaper called Al Nur. The JM membership increased greatly lately reaching several thousands. The JM leadership is very vocal on political issues of interest to all Trinidadians. They concentrate on the Black youth in the streets and lead them away from drugs and self-destruction back to Islam. They led a popular action of cleaning many slums from drugs, using often the strong arm.

In 1983, the army raided the JM headquarters searching for hidden arms, as they accused them of stockpiling them to overthrow the Government. No arms were found, but the charges against them were pressed.

In 1990, JM staged a coup in Trinidad in an attempt to overthrow the Government. They felt it necessary to fight for the oppressed, the homeless and jobless people, victims of the increasing cost of living. Moreover, always viewed as a radical group, JM underwent constant victimization. For instance, children attending their schools were subject to occasional police raids and shootings during school hours. Their coup attempt was unsuccessful and they were subsequently imprisoned. Their case was thereafter brought to courts where they were granted freedom through an amnesty signed by the Acting President of Trinidad and Tobago in the heat of the coup.

Many people, even Muslims, disagree with the way JM handled their grievances and most nationals regard JM as a threat. Some believe that Yasin Abu Bakr is a psychopath, others see him as a hero. Some Muslims do agree that to a small degree, Indian Muslims contributed to JM having to form a separate group and build a separate mosque. Prior to the JM establishment, African Muslims were not encouraged to participate in the mosques they frequented. Their voice was largely quelled since their questions to those in authority were almost always regarded as threatening.

Some of the tension that undeniably exists between Indian and African Muslims can possibly be traced back to the impact of past political influence where politics were so defined that Indians and Africans had different political affiliations. These differences permeated into the society perhaps to the extent of religious affiliation. The continued projection of an "Indian" Islam has naturally led to a feeling of alienation amongst African Muslims. National radio programs hosted by Muslims, who are viewed more as Indians than as Muslims in the eyes of the community, have been dynamic in

projecting Indian culture to the extent that the portrayal of anything Islamic is Indian.

The closeness that has emerged between Muslim youth of both races is good news. Today, young people who are curiously reexamining everything, will give Islam more universal appeal in Trinidad and Tobago.

JM's membership began with about two hundred people. Today, it declares that its membership has reached two thousand. Since the 1990 coup these numbers did diminish as members went in hiding, basically for security reasons, but the membership is building up again. For instance, every Friday, at Juma prayer, about twenty people accept Islam on JM's premises. JM's members believe that this rests on the fact that people are viewing Islam as a practical religion, a way of life that will meet their current social, political and economic problems.

The Jamaat Al-Mumineen

In 1982, the Jamaat-Al-Mumineen, grouping several hundred members, emerged from the Jamaat Al-Muslimeen due to their disagreement with them on their involvement with political issues. They built a school and a mosque in Lavantyne, an economically depressed area. Their newspaper is called *The Voice*. They have an active da'wah program in the slum areas of Trinidad. Members of this group engage in street peddling to help finance their Islamic work.

10 - Islamic Worship and Festivals

Most Muslims pray their five times salat. Families congregate for maghrib and 'isha prayer as this is a convenient time to meet. The Friday Juma prayer receives large turn-outs across Trinidad and Tobago where the khutbah is given in Arabic and English.

Many Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan. It is likely that even Muslims who do not practice Islam on a daily basis, will fast during Ramadan. Many non-Muslim citizens take the pattern and fast as well. The month of Ramadan revives spiritually the Muslim Community in Trinidad and Tobago. During this blessed month, Muslim meet for iftar at homes and mosques. Taraweeh prayers, where twenty rak'ats are offered, are well attended.

Some organizations which collect and distribute zakat feel that many Muslims ignore this pillar of Islam. However, this is simply a feeling and not a statistic, but deriving such a statistic will be monumentally difficult.

During the indentureship period, the immigrants still in an enslaved system, could hardly conceive the idea of going to hajj especially since their masters made it almost impossible for them to fulfill other fundamentals such as belief and prayer. The immigrants were also entrenched in poverty. However, since the early 1900's, Muslims who had long achieved their freedom and were financially stable became conscious of this fifth pillar of Islam. Early voyages to Arabia lasted about six months. Muslims in those times were so keen on fulfilling this pillar of Islam that they sometimes sold their properties to acquire money to go. From time immemorial, hajj has been considered vitally important for both males and females. The first Hajj Committee in Trinidad was formed by Dr. Fazlur-Rahman Ansari, the founder of IMG (35, 36, 37).

The long journey was made by boat. When these fervent believers arrived at the sea port in Jeddah, they mounted the backs of camels to make their journey to Mecca. In those days, older people went to hajj on the surmise that they should live their life first since there was plenty of time to make hajj. However today, many Muslim youth make this journey.

Up to 1960, Trinidadian Muslims left Caribbean shores by boat. Thereafter, pilgrims have exited on planes. Currently, there are four

hajj groups which leave annually from Trinidad carrying other Caribbean nationals with them. In 1965, the cost of the hajj trip was TT 1,500. The 1993 cost was TT 20,000, yet this pillar of Islam is still observed. Increased awareness is manifested in the number of people who save their pennies and borrow from banks to make the journey.

In 1975, one hajj group alone consisted of ninety five people. Unlike in the past, the voyage to and from Mecca is now one month long. Suffice it to say that hajj in these modern times can be performed in just one week.

Trinidadians are constantly reminded by religious leaders about what must be put into place before they can make the hajj. Apart from good health and adequate finance, they are reminded that all debts must be paid and sustenance left for their families. Spiritually, prospective pilgrims are advised to beg forgiveness from anyone they may have hurt and to refrain from backbiting and slandering. They are reminded about the reason for performing hajj which is not for fame, material gain, sightseeing or vacation, but to earn Allah's pleasure.

Although Trinidadian Muslims are aware that a female pilgrim must be accompanied by a "mahram", today the reality is that many women who have neither husband, brother, father, uncle or son still form part of a hajj group once there is someone present in the specific group representing a mahram. Because of the extent of harmony that pervades amongst Muslims in Trinidad, a woman can feel properly secure in the hands of a male elder and his wife. Most people opt to leave their children or wife and children with members of the extended family.

In the past, group leaders forwarded correspondence to those in the Holy Land to secure accommodation months before hajj. Today, phones and fax machines facilitate smoother and more efficient preparation. Apart from modern conveniences which help provide comfort for the pilgrim, hajj group leaders arrange educational sessions that prepare pilgrims for their journey. Their words of wisdom coupled with

printed material makes for pilgrims who are more intuned with what should happen when.

The whole concept of a hajj as embodied here is convenience within itself as every form of assistance is extended to prospective pilgrims in acquiring passports, visas, tickets and vaccinations, usually cholera, yellow fever and typhoid, for those who reside in the Western Hemisphere.

The more predictable circumstances in store for pilgrims these days, manifest the magnificent faith of Trinidadian Muslim ancestors who formed the first hajj groups. Before even the days of correspondence, they set out on such a long, tiresome journey, significantly uncertain of what lay ahead of them.

There is absolutely no doubt of the strong bonds amongst all Muslims that the Pilgrimage to Mecca promotes. When Middle Eastern people realize the distance from which Trinidadians have come for hajj they are frequently moved to tears. Personal relationships have also developed, where hotel managers in the Holy Land for instance get to know the leaders of the Trinidadian hajj groups through continued contact. Some of the fortunate Muslims who have left Trinidadian shores to perform hajj have died and been buried in the Holy Land.

It is true that Trinidadian Muslim organizations form hajj groups which comprise Caribbean nationals. Organisations such as MWL and IMG incorporate Muslims from the Caribbean and other parts of the world into their activities.

Festivals

The two festivals of 'Id-ul-Fitr and 'Id-ul-Adha are celebrated, though within people's economic constraints, in spectacular form and spirit.

'Id-ul-Fitr, at the close of the month of Ramadan, heralds such feelings of goodwill, spiritual fulfillment and extreme unity amongst Trinidadian Muslims that the celebrations are pursued for more than

one week, although for many the prime focus is placed on the actual 'Id day. Well before 'Id day, Imams of the masjids encourage and remind their taraweeh congregations about the zakat-ul-fitr which must be paid to a poor Muslim to ensure that every Muslim has the means to celebrate 'Id. Imams stress the importance for the fasting person giving this zakat to purify his fast since it will wipe out the small inconsistencies he/she may have committed during the fast. In most, if not all, masjids, there exists a system whereby zakat is handed to the Imam who is well aware of the needy Muslim families.

The night before 'Id, the Muslim Community of Trinidad assumes a state of restlessness until the 'Id moon is sighted. However, families still make headway in their 'Id preparations such as in seasoning meats, baking cakes and polishing floors, activities which nevertheless begin during Ramadan. If the moon is not sighted in Trinidad and Tobago, special committees establish contact with neighboring islands, such as Barbados, or even Venezuela, and agree upon the 'Id day.

The morning of 'Id-ul-Fitr is the morning of the year on which Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago feel the essence of brotherhood. As parents and their children, widows and widowers, the poor and wealthy, meet for the 'Id prayer and then khutbah, given in English and then Arabic, all Muslims who have passed the month of Ramadan together, who prayed the twenty rak'ats of taraweeh nightly side by side, embrace each other with tears. People miss those in their families who have died and their tears depict the extent of unity they feel and the bitter-sweet feeling that Ramadan, the most blessed month of the year, has gone. They ardently hope that Allah will accept the sacrifices they have made for His sake.

As the day progresses, Muslims meet for lunch and dinner at each others homes. Families and friends exchange gifts and children relish the coins, sweets and playthings pressed into their hands throughout the day. Members of some Jamaats get together and visit neighboring

Muslim homes so that no Muslim family is left out and every home geared to uncertain truly has the chance to do so. Islamic organizations and Jamaats hold 'Id dinners throughout the entire month of Shawaal.

The occasion of 'Id-ul-Adha in Trinidad and Tobago is unfortunately not accompanied by a national holiday. After the 'Id prayer, most people have to get to work. It is quite common therefore for people to don working attire to attend the 'Id-ul-Adha prayer. Throughout the day, the sacrifice of animals is performed by many men-folk who either rush off after the 'Id prayer to go on site to assist in slaughtering the animal, take a few hours off work or even fit the sacrifice in during their lunch hour. However, many Muslim male employees whose muscle is vital to the sacrifice, are fortunate to get a day off work from understanding employers. Some still, take sick or casual leave.

Many men weigh and parcel their meat on slaughtering sites, usually located in the backyards of countryside homes. They opt to deliver the meat to the needy, friends and family before returning home. Others take their meat home where family members participate in weighing, parceling and delivering. Because of the demands of a non-Muslim structured society where people may not get away from a routine workday, some Muslims too busy to undertake the complete responsibility of slaughtering, parceling and delivering on the same day, may slaughter during one of the three days Islamically allotted and then deliver frozen parcels to the needy, friends and family at their convenience.

Apart from socializing with relatives and friends Muslims enjoy participating in sports such as cricket, football and tennis and like other families, Muslims spend their leisure time at beaches and eating places.

11 - Interaction With Muslims In The Region And Internationally

The fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1920, which brought an end to the Caliphate, was a loss mourned by Muslims in Trinidad. Although not under the Caliph rule, Muslims in the West Indies realised that this meant the end of the unitary leadership for all Muslim states.

The independence of Pakistan in 1947 also created tension in Charlieville, Trinidad. A group of Muslims were attacked by Hindus and many believers perished. Temporary police headquarters were set up in Charlieville to quell the riots. The elation Muslims in Trinidad experienced with regards to Pakistan's independence was simultaneously manifested. TML was established at St Joseph on the 15th of August, 1947, Pakistan Day. In November 1948, M.A. Ispahani, Pakistan's envoy to the United States visited Trinidad and laid the foundation stones for TML's Jinnah Memorial Mosque and College, named after Muhammad Ali Jinnah, regarded as Pakistan's founder and its first Governor General.

The victory of Muslim African American heavyweight boxer, Muhammad Ali, Imam of The Nation of Islam, defeating George Forman in 1974, caused many Trinidadians to embrace Islam.

In 1973, MWL (Mecca) sent a delegation, made up of Dr. Ali Kettani and Mr. Inamullah Khan, to Trinidad and Tobago with the intention of uniting Muslims. In 1974, Muhammad Kamaruddeen Hosein, IMG Secretary General, and late Shafiq Rahman, ASJA President, were invited to Mecca by the MWL to discuss unity. The latter was later elected as a member of the MWL Constituent Assembly.

Saudi Arabia frequently donated funds for Islamic centres and countless scholarships. Dar-ul Ifta in Saudi Arabia pays salaries to da'wah workers in Trinidad, graduates from the Islamic University of Madina, who from time to time travel to neighboring islands to propagate Islam.

In September 1993, the Muslims of Trinidad rallied around the cause of Muslims in Somalia. The ASJA fund collected and sent to Somalia amounted to TT 32,000, equivalent to US 5,634. Other Muslim organizations made ample contributions.

The Bosnia Action Committee was formed through the historical merging of MCC and UIO. Increasing awareness about Muslims in Bosnia as well as collecting and sending funds to assist this cause is on-going. In November 1993, Dr. Shakoor Mohyoddin and wife from the Bosnian Action Team of the USA paid a brief visit to Trinidad to enlighten Muslims on the Bosnian issue from the Muslim viewpoint.

Today, there is no dire need for Islamic da'is in Trinidad and Tobago since West Indian men have sought da'wah training abroad and have returned to Trinidad and Tobago. These home-based da'is are readily available for questioning and counseling. However, on the invitation of Muslim organizations, a sprinkling of da'is still frequent Trinidad and Tobago from the USA, Africa, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Since they feel that Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago already adhere to the basics of Islam, they place emphasis on making Islam more socially oriented and focus on issues such as women's rights and racial integration within Islam.

Muslim women outnumber their men-folk at da'wah lectures and play their part in challenging and questioning the da'is. When da'is visit with wives equally equipped with Islamic knowledge, lectures are arranged especially for women.

Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago are identifying more with the rest of the Muslim world, than with co-nationals. For instance, newsletters from Muslim organizations worldwide stream into Trinidad and Tobago.

Identifying with Muslims abroad has served to strengthen the Muslims in Trinidad and Tobago who realize that they do not exist in the isolation of their twin island republic, but Muslims like them live in all parts of the world. In this light, they strive through community

work to lend their support, be it financial or otherwise, to help less fortunate Muslim brothers and sisters worldwide.

12 - Conclusions

Over the years, a fair number of Muslims have migrated to Canada, the USA and even back to India and Pakistan. The majority of males and females who have left in pursuit of tertiary education have gone alone and returned here to live, or remained abroad where they have started new lives. In most cases, families have migrated for economic reasons and the conflict of values present in the multi-racial, multi religious Caribbean surfaces also in the countries to which these Muslims migrate, but liaising with the abundantly increasing Muslim group within their vicinity helps strengthen Islamic values.

Only about 2% of Muslims have migrated to foreign lands and so there has been no marked effect on Islamic Associations. In certain communities outside Trinidad, Trinidadian Muslim presence has been felt especially in Miami (Florida, USA), Maryland (USA), New York (USA) and Toronto (Canada).

The words of wisdom of Haji Ruknuddeen, the late Sheikh-ul-Islam of Trinidad and Tobago, on the day of Id-ul-Fitr many years ago, written in Urdu and translated here into English, apart from carrying enormous advice, outline goals which through Allah's mercy Trinidad and Tobago have achieved :

"Greetings and good wishes to you on this auspicious day of 'Id-ul-Fitr. May Almighty Allah protect and guide you from all evil into the path of righteousness and piety".

"All praise is due to the Creator, the Most High, Who - through His Mercy - sent down the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be peace) as a guide to all nations, and through Whose blessings we have been favored once more to participate in this festival of Fast Breaking".

"Today, millions of our brethren are, like us, rejoicing over the successful completion of the Holy Month of Ramadan, the sacred month of Mercy and Blessings, during which we have so attentively adhered to the injunctions of our religion. Indeed, it is this realization that makes Id-ul-Fitr an occasion of such joy and happiness".

"In extending my good wishes to you this year, I am happy to note the successful strides which we have been making for the well being of Islam in this colony. In recent times, we have beautiful mosques erected in different parts of the Island. We have had visits from notable sons of Islam who have cheered our hearts and re-directed us to the path of our wonderful religious and cultural heritage. But, most important of all, is that those who never even thought of religion are today looking up to Islam and obtaining from it the soothing effect of its glory, and the comfort, contentment and peace which it offers its followers".

"In these circumstances, we are now in a position to do great work, not only for our community but for humanity at large. Keep before you the torch of truthfulness and sincerity. Work unitedly and enthusiastically for the name of our cherished religion. Co operate with the other communities of the colony for the general peace and progress of the colony".

"This is my message to you. May Allah bless you all" (7).

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CHAPTER VII

Islam in Guyana

by

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1 - Introduction ; 2 - Formation of the Muslim Community : The Africans ; 3 - Formation of the Muslim Community : The Indians ; 4- Present Muslim Population and its Distribution ; 5 - The Jamaat : Basic Organization Unit ; 6 - Formation of National Organizations ; 7 - Crisis of Muslim Organization in Guyana ; 8 - Ahmed Ihwaas and Islamic Revival in Guyana ; 9 - The Rebirth of National Islamic Organizations : CIOG and GIT ; 10 - Mosques in Guyana ; 11 - The Role of Muslims in Guyana in Politics and Society ; 12- Opportunities and Challenges. Notes and References ; Bibliography.

1 - Introduction

Guyana is the only English-speaking country of South America, located in the North-Eastern corner of the Continent. It has an area of 215,000 km², and had a population of 730,000 people in 1993. It has three neighbors : Surinam in the East is Dutch-speaking, Venezuela in the West is Spanish-speaking ; and Brazil in the South is Portuguese-speaking. It is limited to the North by the Atlantic Ocean. Guyana is a tropical country with an equatorial climate.

"Guyana" is an Amerindian word which means "land of many waters". This is so because it possesses four major rivers : the mighty Essequibo, the Demerara, the Berbice and the Corentyne, and an

extensive network of other rivers and creeks. There is a large number of rapids and waterfalls. The Kaiteur Falls, where the broad Potaro River thunders into a great forested gorge, is four times the height of the Niagara Falls and undoubtedly one of the world's most impressive natural wonders.

Guyana is divided into four natural regions : the Coastal Region where most of the population lives and where three of the country's major economic activities, sugar and rice cultivation and bauxite production, are concentrated ; Hilly Sand and Clay Belt, situated immediately after the Coastal Plain. It has a wide belt tropical forest beyond which are extensive savannahs ; the Highland Region which occupies two-third of the country and has four mountain ranges : The Imataca in the North-West; the Pakaraima in the West, the Kanuku in the South-West and the Akarai in the South. This area is very rich in minerals.

During the last four years, Guyana has experienced growth rates above world and regional averages. Considerable foreign and local private investment has been attracted, including to the OMAI Gold Mine, the largest in South America, and to a major forest operation linked to a plywood plant. International funding is supporting significant improvements and the rehabilitation infrastructure of the country.

Varied resources in the interior, including a major potential for "eco-tourism", await development ; but Guyana insists upon their selective and ecological sensitive exploitation. A large tract of forest (Iwokrama) has been dedicated to an experimental international project for the scientific study of the rain-forest resources, and their rational and sustainable development.

Guyana's major exports are bauxite, sugar, rice, shrimp (prawns), gold, fresh fruits and vegetables, molasses, timber and timber products, and ready-made garments. Its major imports are machinery

and spares, fuel and lubricants, automobiles, computers, etc... Its GDP for 1992 was US 4,224.

The economy of Guyana entered a phase liberalization of the statistics of the 1970's and most the 1980's. It is now characterized by free-market conditions, an open investment climate, moderate inflation, floating but stable exchange rates, and a drive to privatize the remaining state enterprises.

The main centers of population are reasonably well linked by paved roads and by vehicle ferries across the Essequibo, the Berbice and the Demerara rivers. The latter is also crossed by a bridge just below Georgetown, the capital. Access to the rest of the country is by air or coastal and river transport, the latter being in many cases a difficult because of rapids, waterfalls and other hazards, but correspondingly attractive to those who seek adventurous recreation.

Access to Guyana from outside is mainly by air, through the international airport at Timehri ; but a motorable road north from Brazil to the coast is close to completion. Cargo movements are mostly through the port of Georgetown. Telecommunications have improved greatly following its privatization in 1991.

Amerindians, the indigenous people of Guyana, lived in this region for over seven thousand years. The Dutch were the first Europeans to settle in this country. They established their first settlement at Kye-Kyo-Over-All in the Essequibo in 1616, and their second in Berbice in 1624. In 1803, the Dutch rule gave way to the British. Enslaved Africans were brought from West Africa to work on the plantations.

After the emancipation of the slaves in 1834, indentured servants came from Portuguese Madeira, China and more significantly in numerical terms, from India. There was also free migration by Africans from the West Indies.

Guyana gained its independence in May, 1966, with a parliamentary system of government, and since 1970, when the country became a republic, a President. The current President since

the elections of 1992 is Cheddi Jagan (an Indian Hindu), leader of the Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP). The Opposition Leader is Hugh Desmond Hoyte (an African Christian), leader of the Peoples' National Congress (PNC) and former President of the country before 1992. Guyana is a member of CARICOM and the Non-Aligned Movement. Its ambassador to the United Nations was elected as the President of the General Assembly for the 1993 - 94 session. Guyana's system government is the Co-operative Republic within the Commonwealth, based on the system of Proportional Representation.

Guyana is called "The Land Of Six Peoples". Its population is composed of the indigenous people, the Amerindians, people of African decent, and those of Indian decent, jointly comprising the great majority, and three smaller groups: the Chinese, the Portuguese and persons of British decent. These together brought the total population to 751,226 in 1992 with an urban population of 31% (1).

The population distribution by ethnic group between 1970 and 1992 is shown in Table 1.1. The mestizos were counted with those of African origin. They formed 10.3% of the total population in 1970, and 7.1% of the total in 1992. The slow rate of increase of the population is a result of the large rate of emigration, mainly to Canada, the United States and neighboring countries. It is estimated that 135,000 Guyanese emigrated out of Guyana in the period 1984 - 1994.

Table 1.1 : Evolution of Ethnic Groups In Guyana Between 1970 and 1992

Ethnic Group	1970		1992	
	Number	%	Number	%
East Indians	362,736	51.8	371,856	49.5
Africans	290,718	41.5	320,773	42.7
Amerindians	34,302	4.9	51,085	6.8
Others	12,088	1.8	7,510	1.0
Total	699,844	100.0	751,224	100.0

Religiously, about 52% of the population of Guyana is Christian, 33% Hindu and 15% Muslim. Generally, most Africans, Amerindians and Portuguese are Christian today, and most East Indians are Hindu or Muslim.

Administratively, Guyana is divided into three counties: Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice. These in turn are divided into ten administrative regions. The Main cities are: Georgetown (160,000 inhabitants), the capital, New Amsterdam (30,000) and Springfield (20,000).

2 - The Formation of the Muslim Community : The Africans

There is evidence that suggests that Muslims were in Guyana long before Columbus. Cyrus Gordon in "Before Columbus", reported that a large amount of Mediterranean coins were found off the coast of Venezuela, two of which were Arabic of the 8th Century CE (2). He further went on to write that a Moorish ship "perhaps from Spain or North Africa seems to have crossed the Atlantic around 800 AD" (2).

According to Muslim-historians and geographers, such as Al-Mas'udi, 'Umar Ibn al Qutiyah, Al-Idrisi, Al 'Umari, etc.... Muslims came to these parts from Andalucia, North Africa and West Africa long before Columbus (3). Among these Muslims, the Mandinka from West Africa made the greatest impact (4).

Mandinka presence in America started in Brazil. They used it as a base for exploration of the Americas and "traveled along rivers in the dense jungles of South America and overland till they reached North America" (5).

According to Leo Weiner, the re-known American historian and linguist, in his well documented and controversial work, "Africa And The Discovery Of America", "West African Muslims spread throughout the Caribbean, South and Central America and also

reached Canada. They were intermarrying with the Amerindians" (4), and settled in this Continent.

In writing about the Amerindians in the Caribbean in his article, "History Of The Caribs" in the "Daily Clarion", P.V. Ramos wrote : "When Christopher Columbus discovered the West Indies about the year 1493 AD, he found there a race of white people (i.e. half breeds) with woolly hair who he called the Caribs. They were sea faring hunters and tillers of soil, peaceful and united. They hated aggression. Their religion was Mohamedianism and their language Arabic" (4).

According to A.H. Quick, the Black Caribs were Muslims and they have some Islamic practices such as the total prohibition from eating pork (6).

Guyana had Caribs among its indigenous people. Both Brazil in the South and Venezuela in the West have borders with Guyana. It is probable that Muslims were in Guyana in that early period. Historically, there is a popular belief that Guyana had an immense wealth of gold. Europeans organized many expeditions to find it (7). The West and the North Africans were doing a lucrative trading with it. Probably, Muslims settled in Guyana, intermarried with the Amerindians, and were involved in mining gold. This needs to be explored further.

During the Dutch colonization of Guyana, since around 1672, and the establishment of the sugar plantation economy, many Africans from West Africa were kidnapped by European traders and transported to Guyana where they were sold into slavery, first to the Dutch and then to the British. Because of the paucity of information, it is impossible to determine the percentage of Muslims among these slaves, but many were Muslims who deemed "the European a race of formidable but ignorant heathens" (8).

In 1763, there was a major slave revolt in Berbice against the Dutch. The leader of the revolt was a Muslim called Cuffy (probably Abdul-Kafi). He was from among the Al-Mina slaves who were

Muslims. Under Cuffy, the slaves were successful in their rebellion. But later when he died, there was no leader to hold them together and thus they were divided along tribal lines. Eventually, they were defeated and enslaved once again by the Dutch.

According to the memoirs of Van Hoogenheim, the then Dutch Governor, Cuffy wrote him a letter "setting out the only condition for a truce was that the Governor should stop imposing Christian doctrines on the slaves" (9). When questioned, a slave said: "The Christians were rough on them, that they were not going to tolerate any Christian or Whites in their country and that they intend to be masters of Berbice" (10). Thus, the major cause of the rebellion was the forcible conversion of the slaves into Christianity.

These rebels had a connection with Djuka and Saramaka Bush Negroes of Suriname who under the leadership of Arabi and Zam-Zam (two Muslims) defeated the Dutch (11) and signed peace treaties with them in 1761 and 1762 respectively (12). There are some Islamic practices among them, such as the ablution (wudu), in Suriname today (13). The Berbice revolt in 1763 may have been an effort to establish a Muslim enclave from Suriname to Berbice (Berbice is at the border of Suriname). More research is needed in this area (14).

The enslaved Muslims who were brought to Guyana found the conditions very hostile to Islam. For fear of the punishment of their masters, they hid their identities, but gradually the overbearing influence of the White slave masters influenced them. The British, having captured Guyana from the Dutch were considered stronger, and with them came Christian missionaries.

The religious concepts of European Christians did not allow them to conceive of the Africans as having a respectable religion, a civilization, a culture, being literate, or a people with knowledge and intelligence. The slaves were forcefully beaten into subjection, socially, mentally, economically and religiously, and made to believe that Whites were superior. All customs and practices of the slaves

were banned. They were given pork aspart of the diet. Then, it was a question of eat or starve and further be punished.

What was prohibited could not be reinforced by other means since the Muslims were isolated as individuals on an estate with no freedom or means of communicating with other Muslims on other estates. The Whites feared that if the slaves were permitted the freedom of their culture and religion, they would remain united and better equipped to oppose them.

The Christian Church played a dominant role in acculturing the slaves and making Christians out of Muslims: "The process of socialization for the slaves born on the plantations was geared to establishing a personality which accepted its own lank of worth and attached an exaggerated value to the Whites. Once the slave believed in his own inferiority, it was assumed he would accept as of right the position of the master and his own servile and uncontrolled status in the system" (16). "The missionaries claimed that they came to make the slaves more obedient to their masters and it seems that this was their honest intention" (16).

In making the Africans servile, the Church was establishing the superiority of the Whites and Christianity, it was the Church that undertook to educate the slave. This education involved the process of acculturation which sustained the conversion experience (17). At first, the planters objected to any form of education of the slaves, but later they changed their views and used education as a means of social control. The greatest impact was made on the children of the slaves. The years of suppression and brutality forced the slave into subjection. The ban on the costumes, beliefs and practices made them weak, and with regards to the Muslims their faith suffered. Such oppression and harassment was reinforced by the food served and the brainwashing of the Christian Church. With the passing of time, Muslim beliefs faded and were replaced by Christian concepts.

Writing about John Wray, a Christian missionary, Mc Gowon wrote: "Wray was not to attempt to change the slave system, but rather to seek to improve the morals and conduct of the slaves and to lend them to be faithful and obedient to their masters, and in reality to make them more subordinate and resigned to their lot. He was also to seek to promote peace and good order in the colony" (18).

This description is fitting for the other Christian missionaries also (18). They "stressed faithfulness, obedience and submission to the extent of declaring that it was wrong for a slave to ran away or rebel against a cruel master" (19).

In May, 1811, the planters and Governor Bentwick issued a proclamation prohibiting slaves to assemble for religious meetings before sunrise and after sunset (20). Mc Govon wrote that it was primarily so because the planters were against Christian missionaries (20). But the slaves were forbidden to assemble for religious meetings not because of the missionaries, since they used to work among them in the evenings, but because they were Muslims gathering for the morning prayers (fajr) before sunrise and the evening prayers (maghrib) after sunset.

When emancipation came on August 1st, 1834, which was a Friday, the slaves celebrated with "Friday midday prayers" (9). Only Muslims perform congregational midday prayers called jumu'ah.

Under the cruel system slavery and the harsh codes which governed the lives of the slaves, African Muslims were not allowed to communicate in Arabic or in their native languages among themselves, but were forced to speak the master's language (21).

Since the slaves had no freedom at all, it was very difficult for them to observe the pillars of Islam. Though they performed prayers discretely, the cruelty the slave system made it impossible for them to offer prayers five times daily. Nor were they allowed to pray openly. This contributed in eradicating Islam as a "Community religion" (22).

This is how Sultana Afroze described the Muslims under slavery in Jamaica under the British which was no different in Guyana.

Furthermore, as the virtue of family life and marriage was substituted among the slaves with adultery and family dispersion, there was no succeeding African generations to accept and practice Islam (22). All that remained by 1838 was a dim recollection of the religious practices of their parents and country. Probably, had they been allowed to retain only their names, Islam would have still been alive among them today, but by Freedom Day they were all Christianized and Anglicized.

According to Mc Gowon (23), Benjamin (24) and Velzing (25), research in the slave period in Guyana is very poor because most documents are in the Dutch language, thus inhibiting historians. Moreover, some Dutch records are fragmentary and vague. Certainly more investigation is needed to determine what happened to Islam among Africans after the abolition of slavery in 1834.

In that respect, Europeans seek to influence us to believe that slaves were emancipated purely on humanitarian grounds. M. Shahabuddin proposes that "neither the doctrine of Christianity nor the sentiments of humanity have yet succeeded in extinguishing slavery in any country where rural slavery could continue with profit" (26). Eric Williams (1967) gave five reasons why slaves were emancipated in British territories. These are economical, political, international, colonial and social. The overriding factors were economical. The planters noted the drop in production and the high cost of maintaining the slaves. It was no longer profitable to produce sugar with slave labor. Many estates were abandoned and planters were looking for cheaper means of production. In view of the existing circumstances on the sugar estates and the campaign for the anti-slave group in England, slavery was abolished in 1834, and in 1838 the slaves were emancipated.

There was no traces of Islam left among Africans in Guyana in the early 20th century. They started to accept Islam again in the 1960's. Now they number more than 3,000 Muslims and are increasing.

3 - Formation of the Muslim Community : The Indians

The second group of Muslims, Indian indentured immigrants, arrived in Guyana (then called British Guiana) in 1838 (27). With the abolition of slavery, and the emancipation of slaves in 1838, the planters were exploring the possibility of securing cheaper alternative labor. In 1834, Portuguese laborers were brought from Madeira to work on the estates. This had some social implications as the Portuguese, in spite of being Europeans, were doing the work of the slaves. However, they proved unsuitable for the hardship of cane cultivation. In 1835, the planters experimented with freed creoles. The creoles soon adopted the attitude of the local African population. The planters desperately needed cheap labor otherwise they would face financial ruin. They could not afford to pay regular wages as they spent a large amount of money on agricultural implements or liquidating mortgages.

On January 4, 1836, John Gladstone, estate proprietor resident in Britain, enquired of Messers Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Company, about the possibility of securing immigrant labour from India. The response was positive and an Order in Council was passed on July 12, 1837, making provision for indentured immigrants from India to be bound to labor on the estates for five years. On May 5-6, 1838, two ships, S.S. Whitby and S.S. Hesperus, disembarked 396 immigrants who were later distributed to six estates.

In 1939, immigration from India was halted on account of the bad treatment of the indentured laborers. According to the report of John Scobble, "the Dhangurs (those who came from Eastern India) are always spoken of as more akin to the monkey than the man. They

have no religion, no education, and, in their present state, no wants beyond eating, drinking and sleeping" (28).

The Indians were labelled "hill coolies". They were duped and forced to board the two ships, Whitby and Hesperus. Some were kidnapped and held as prisoners at depots. As a result of increasing demand for labor "the trade of kidnapping coolies had been extensively carried on, and the prison depots had been established in the villages near Calcutta for the security of the wretched creatures, where they were most infamously treated, and guarded with the utmost jealousy and care to prevent their escape" (29). "The coolies were forced to board the Hesperus... the hatches were beaten down" (29).

Hindus and Muslims were among the indentured laborers, but unlike the slave period, no effort was made to separate the laborers on account of language, class, caste, village or region. Groupings in this case proved to be an advantage to the planters. Muslims and Hindus occupied the barrack-like quarters of the slaves. The Africans who remained on the estate occupied a section of the ranges. The immigrants also found Portuguese workers.

The bad treatment of the Indians drew the attention of the Colonial Office and the Colonial Government of India. There were the usual investigations to pacify the situation. In 1838, a Commission of Enquiry was appointed, but the report was only read in 1840. There were reports of flogging, imprisonment on vagrancy charges, sickness, high death rate and unsanitary hospitals (30). The immigrants were forced to work extra hours, beaten on the pretext of poor discipline or refusal to work or even reporting late for work.

The planters were very powerful. They controlled the Legislative Assembly, the judiciary, police and politicians in England. The deplorable conditions of the immigrants and their constant abuse resulted in public condemnation of the indentured system. There was enough pressure to cause Britain to place an embargo on immigration

from India. The planters lobbied heavily and, with the help of the press, Government officials and politicians, represented their economic plight, the dire need for cheap labor. They argued that if sufficient labor was not made available the estates would have to be abandoned. In their representation they asked for additional powers to exercise control and authority over the immigrants. "Legislation was passed by the Government of India in 1844 repealing the prohibition on emigration to these colonies" (26). In 1845, three ships brought a total of 826 Indian immigrants to Guyana.

Thus, emigration "recommenced in 1845, temporarily suspended three years later, and continued uninterruptedly from 1851 to its abolition in 1917" (27). Labor was also brought from China in 1853 but the experiment was unsuccessful. Among those who championed the rights of the Indian immigrants were George William Des Voeux and James Crosby. Both men were treated badly by the Governor of British Guiana and the plantocracy.

From 1838 to 1917 approximately 238,216 Indians were brought to Guyana (32). Most came from the Bengal Presidency, the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Bihar and South India (31). Among them, approximately 15% (about 36,000 persons) were Muslims. On completion of their contract, many laborers returned to India, but despite the hardships many remained and diverted in rice cultivation, cattle rearing and business. The total number of those who returned to India between 1834 and 1949 is 75,547 persons.

"Laws were enacted by the planters which were designed to keep the Indians on the estates a captive labor force" (33). John Jenkins described the Indians fate thus: "Take a large factory in Birmingham or Belfast, build a wall around it, shut in it work people from all intercourse, save at rare intervals, with the outside world, keep them in absolute heathen ignorance and get all the work you can out of them, treat them not unkindly, leave social habits and relations to themselves, as matters not concerning you who make money from

their labor, and you would have constituted a little community resembling, in no small degree a sugar estate in British Guiana" (34).

The conditions under the indentureship system and those on the plantations (long working hours, low wages, the hostile attitude on the part of the plantation owners and Christian missionaries) did not afford much opportunity for community development. Furthermore, the Muslims among the Indians were illiterate and were forced to co-exist with the Hindus by pressure of the plantation society (35)

However, in spite of all these difficulties, Muslims easily blended with the Indian Community and were identifiable in every sector of development. In spite of the discrimination that did not allow them to progress as best they could, by 1917, both Muslims and Hindus were firmly established in Guyana.

The Guyana census figures showed a constant rise in the Indian population as reported in Table 3.1. The percentage of Indians in the total population of Guyana kept increasing fast from 1841 from almost nill to reach 44% in 1917. It dropped afterwards slightly to 42% to start increasing again slowly to reach a peak of around 52% in 1970. Then, this percentage started diminishing afterwards due to a slightly higher rate of East Indian emigration with respect to the total population.

Table 3.1: Evolution of the East Indian Population in Guyana from 1841 to 1992

Year	Total Population	Indians	%
1841	98,440	315	0.32
1851	128,000	7,682	6.0
1861	147,933	23,196	15.7
1869	206,128	44,936	21.8
1879	255,700	83,563	32.7
1889	282,092	106,236	37.7

Following Table 3.1: Evolution of the East Indian Population in Guyana from 1841 to 1992

1899	286,182	116,934	40.9
1909	305,074	132,921	43.6
1917	314,026	138,140	44.0
1921	297,691	124,938	42.0
1941	310,933	130,540	42.0
1946	375,701	163,434	43.5
1960	560,330	267,797	47.8
1970	699,848	362,736	51.8
1992	751,224	371,856	49.5

Among Indians, the percentage of Muslims also increased as shown in Table 3.2. It increased continuously from around 11% in 1891 to around 19% in 1960. This increase is due certainly to a higher natural increase among Muslims and a lesser rate of return to India compared to the Hindus. The large rates of emigration after 1970 and its different rates among different religious groups might explain also the larger increase in the Muslim percentage in 1992.

At present, there are in Guyana about 5,000 non-Indian Muslims, thus bringing the total Muslim population to 113,000 people or around 15% of the total in 1992.

Table 3.2 : Evolution of the Indian Muslim Population between 1891 and 1992

Year	Indians	Indian Muslims	% in Indians	% in Guyana
1891	105,463	11,691	11.1%	4.2%
1911	126,517	18,217	14.4%	6.2%
1921	124,938	18,410	14.7%	6.2%

**Table 4.2 : Population Distribution per Region in 1992 -
(Reference HIES/LSMS 1993 Survey)**

Region	Population
Demarara-Mahaica	298,238
East Berbice-Corentyne	127,708
Essequibo Ilds-West Demerara	81,883
Mahaica-Berbice	56,342
Pomeroon-Supenam	50,332
Upper Demerara-Berbice	48,078
Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo	28,546
Barima-Waini	26,293
Cuyuni-Mazaruni	19,531
Potaro-Siparuni	14,273
Guyana	751,224

In recognition of the three religions present in Guyana, the State declared as national holidays Good Friday, Easter Monday and Christmas (Christian), Boning Day (Dec. 26), Phagwah (Spring Festival) and Duvali (Light Festival) (Hinduism) and Youman-Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet) and Eidul-Adha (Islam).

Those Guyanese of African origin are returning to Islam in great numbers. In 1975, they were about 50 African Muslims ; in 1985, they were 500 and today in 1995 they are about 3,000 African Muslims in Guyana.

The 1960's were the years of the growing influence of the Civil Rights movement in the USA. It was a time when Islam took there a place of prominence through the teachings of the late Elijah Muhammad. An African-Guyanese, also named Muhammad, returned

home from the USA and, with others, founded the Robb Street Masjid and the "Guyana Muslim Mission" (GMM), made up mostly of Guyanese of African origin. Muhammad later returned to the USA.

GMM eventually joined the main stream of Sunni Islam. In 1981, Muhammed Farouk, then GMM Imam, attended the six week Imam Course in Trinidad. In 1994, two GMM members, Khaleel and Abdul-Jabbar, spent one year studying Islam in Medinah Islamic University (Saudi Arabia). In 1991, one GMM member attended the Da'wah Academy course in Trinidad, and in 1994, the present GMM Imam, Tariq Cave, attended the Da'wah Academy course in Islamabad.

GMM applied for a parcel of land along Mandela Avenue in Georgetown. Lease was denied by the PNC Government, since they were not convinced that the organization has the capacity to use it. But the then GMM Imam, Saifudeen, was living on the land for over 20 years. He was evicted and the land was given to Dawn Project, an American-based organization. GMM took the matter to the attention of the courts.

Presently, there are six African Muslim jamaats. These are in Queenstown, Essequibo ; Alboystown, Georgetown ; Victoria and Bagotville, East Bank Demerara ; Golden Grove on the East Coast, in addition to the Cobbs Street jamaat. There is a sizable African Muslim population in the Muslim Community of Linden. Among the African returnees to Islam are professionals, policemen, soldiers and the laymen. Some are famous politicians such as Hamilton Bilal Green, the former Prime Minister of Guyana and now Mayor of Georgetown, and Norman Mas'ud Mclean, the former Chief of Staff of the Guyanese Army, and now director of a major mining company.

Some of main Muslim religious leaders of African origin are : Salahudeen (half African, half Amerindian), Imam and Ameer in Linden ; Tariq Ziyad in Essequibo ; Musa Amin, Abdullatif and Nasheef in West Demerara ; Usamah Abdul-Samad, Shaheed Uthman, Omar Oweis and Omar Saeed in Georgetown and East Demerara ; and

Najil Mujay in Berbice. The number of African-Guyanese Muslims is expected to grow greatly in the future.

The overwhelming majority of Guyanese Muslims are Sunnis of the Hanafi School. However, there are two small Shia jamaats in the country, one mostly Indian in Canjie, Berbice, headed by Latif Ali ; the other mostly African in Linden, headed by Abdul-Qadir. They are involved in education, da'wah and social welfare. Their numbers do not reach the hundred and their influence is minimal so far. Linden has a Shia Muslim mayor and a teacher from Zanzibar, Mohammed Ali, who graduated from Qom (Iran).

The introduction of other practices other than those of the Hanafi School started in the 1980's, especially by Salafis. Terms such as shirk and bid'ah were so averused as to create confusion and rejection by the Muslim Community.

5 - The Jamaat : Basic Organizational Unit

The term "jamaat" is referred to Muslim men, women and children who reside in a specific area and attend a particular masjid. The jamaat, except in a few cases, is managed by the Imam, President and elected members under a fixed set of rules called the Jamaat Constitution.

Each sugar estate was an enclave. Its Manager had unlimited powers. Indian laborers were bound to the estate boundaries. In the event any wished to travel, he was required to secure a special pass. Failure to do so resulted, under the Vagrancy Act, in imprisonment, imposition of a fine or flogging. In dealing with Indians, no distinction was made between Hindus and Muslims. Even in the history books of Guyana, they were treated as Indians and, with regard to Christian writers, they were Pagans. Christians offered them Christ and wanted to save their souls from damnation. Some Indians, on the expiration of their contract, left the estate and resorted to farming, trading or some

form of business. From this group arose the educated class and professionals.

While estate laws deprived Muslims of certain rights, they also strengthened their position and indirectly facilitated the establishment of Islam. Indentureship, unlike slavery, favored a continuity of cultural practices and religious beliefs. "This was the case not only because the immigration and labor laws which defined these rights served to confine the new immigrants to ethnic ghettos" (36). The planters did not consider changes important or necessary. All they wanted was the labor force and nothing should be encouraged to affect the indenturers in any way as to cause them to withdraw from the estate at the expiration of their contract. To encourage retention, certain limited freedom was granted, such as having a kitchen garden, giving of land for rice farming/ground provision, creating pastures for cattle, and retention of language, culture, dress, food, and freedom to practice their religion.

As a general policy, there was freedom of religion, but there were instances when Muslims were penalized (whipped, harassed, given short pay, denied work, discriminated against) mainly by foremen and overseers, and suffered because of their religious practices.

In 1846, compulsory education was introduced for children under fourteen years. The schools operated under a dual control system with the Church providing education according to their standards. The children who attended recited Christian prayers at least four times per day, sang hymns, carols and attended Church on certain occasions.

The Muslims saw great danger in these schools. They expressed the fear that their children, having attended a school controlled by Christian teachers, would imbibe Christian doctrines and would become apostate. Appeal was made to the Estate Manager and the Indian Immigration Officer. The law was then relaxed and parents were not persecuted in Court for not sending their children to school. The relaxing of this law proved beneficial to the planter who made use

of child labor in what was called the "creole gangs". The parents also benefitted as their children brought in much needed additional income.

Christian evangelisation was resisted by Indian Muslims vociferously. Conversions to Christianity among Muslims were sparse and few (37). This caused Rev. Gibson in 1889 to summarize his Mission's view thus : "When Christianity has once again taken hold of the Muslims of this colony, the success of the missions among our Indian population will be ensured" (37).

The proselytizing spirit of the Christians urged them to enter the estates to make converts of Muslims and Hindus. This too was objected to. The Christian missionaries were prohibited from entering the estates to spread Christian doctrines. Christian missionaries were not new to Muslims. They had faced them in India as some had a military record, took part in the Indian Mutiny, and knew how India was lost to the British.

Immigrants' life on the estate assumed a similar pattern as that of India. Muslims and Hindus had much in common. In some cases, they shared strong bonds and were "jahajis" (38). Muslims and Hindus peacefully coexisted on the estate. In a communal manner, they settled disputes and grievances through the "Panchayat" (a five-man committee).

New immigrants provided a continuous link with India. In many ways, they reinforced beliefs, customs and practices and kept them alive. Furthermore, the later batches of Muslims were more educated and learned about Islam than the first ones. They provided leadership and assumed the role of Imams and teachers. Among them were those who received an Islamic education, memorized Qur'an (39), were versed in Urdu and Persian, and could read and write English.

The establishment of a jamaat and its development centred around the imam/teacher. When a teacher was found, the children (boys and girls) were sent to his home to be taught Arabic, Urdu and Persian, at his convenience. Sometimes, classes were held in the mornings,

sometimes in the evenings. Thus, many Muslim men and women learned to recite the Qur'an and to read Arabic, Urdu and Persian, but not to read and write English.

First, the Muslims followed the Indian pattern by giving control of the affairs of the Jamaat to the Imam. By the 1930's, there was a shift towards committees. By then, many Muslims attained secondary education, while some others returned home as professionals after receiving their training in Western Universities. The jamaats then formulated constitutions and conducted elections (normally a show of hands) at regular intervals ranging from one year to three years when they elected the Committee of Management, including the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and a fixed number of members. Usually the Imam is a member of this Committee, but not necessarily the Deputy Imam and the Muezzin.

Some jamaats re-wrote their constitutions to introduce an Islamic system with, instead of a President, an "Ameer" being the head of the jamaat and its Imam. Masjid # 78 had an Imam and an Ameer. This arrangement did not work well and resulted in open confrontation, and court battles. A few years ago, some members of the jamaat of Meten-Meer-Zorg West attempted to introduce the Ameer system but their proposal was rejected by the majority.

In jamaats where Executive Committees are elected, attempt is made to define the role and responsibilities of the Imam and the President. There are many instances when the two disagree on a given matter leading to tension in the jamaat. Usually, the constitution of the jamaat does not spell out the Islamic qualities of the President (elected by a simple majority) or a Committee member. This may hamper the moral and spiritual development of the general membership of the jamaat. Imams, willingly or unwillingly, yield their authority to the elected officers. Thus, the jamaat experiences a dual system of power sharing, with its accompanying severe disadvantages.

Usually, jamaats include a Muslim Youth Organization, a Women Group and own a separate building used as an Islamic school. Most jamaats go through an annual routine such as observance of Eid-ul-Fitr, Shabe Barrat, Isra and Mi'raj, Ashura and Youman Nabi ; performance of Salatul Tarawih, breaking of fast at the Masjid, and celebrating Lilatul Qadr during the month of Ramadhan ; payment of Sadaqatul Fitr ; and hosting visitors. In jamaats with strong leadership, there are classes for youth and adults (courses for young boys and girls are given separately) ; fund raising activities are carried out ; and games are organized.

Jamaats are not exclusive communities as Muslims are neighbors of Christians, Hindus and others. The Muslim Community in Guyana is organized in about 130 jamaats.

The function of the jamaat is the collective effort of its members in an organized manner. The actions of the Imam, and the Executive Committee (or the Shura Council) represent the desire of the jamaat. The function of the jamaat is to generate an Islamic atmosphere among its members, to formulate their concept of issues, to encourage attendance in the Masjid, to design programs and to plan events. Apart from this, the jamaat takes into consideration all aspects of society dealing with Muslims and non-Muslims. As Guyana is a plural society, the jamaat must take into account current issues and see how they affect Muslims. In case a jamaat cannot handle an issue, it turns to a national Muslim organization. It may also cooperate with non-Muslims in informing or educating Muslims, e.g., seminar on AIDS.

Generally, the jamaat is concerned with the welfare of Muslims. It encourages Islamic education, fosters unity, brotherhood, and develops Islamic awareness. This effort can take the form of lectures, seminars, meetings, workshops and visits. The jamaat is responsible for the physical aspect of the Masjid, its compound, and other assets of the Muslims. It provides the necessary funds to meet costs of projects, and to account for expenditures. It organizes, plans and

executes projects to benefit Muslims and educates non-Muslims on Islam.

The level of success of a jamaat depends on the quality of its office bearers. Some may be laborers, while others may be educated but not knowledgeable about Islam or may not be trained to manage Muslim affairs. The first set of Guyana Imams were indentured laborers. Most had some Islamic secondary education in India, and few were hafizul-Qur'an. With time, the education, training and knowledge of succeeding Imams decreased.

As an example, consider one region in Guyana that has twenty Masjids in a 35 km stretch on the Demerara West Coast. Their age and education level are shown in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2. Furthermore, 17 Imams of the 20 considered have an elementary Islamic education while only 6 can write and prepare their own Khutbahs. Migration contributes to this sad situation, since the most qualified Imams emigrate to North America. Finding suitable replacements is always a problem.

Table 5.1 : Age of Imams in the WDC in 1994

Age group	Number
Above 60	8
50-60	3
Below 50	9
Total	20

Table 5.2 : General Education of Imams in the WDC in 1994

Education level	No.
University Graduates	3
Secondary Education	2
Primary Education	15
Total	20

Many Imams are uneducated. Only few attended the CIOG Imam training courses, other participants are youngsters. However, in many Mosques, GIT workers are Imams who are well educated in Islam. Also, some Mosques have Imams who graduated from Madina Islamic University (Saudi Arabia) or Islamic universities in India. But belonging to a jamaat, accepting the leadership of the Imam and recognizing authority were not new to Guyana Muslims. In the villages of India, the Imam's sanction against a member of the jamaat was always supported by the general membership.

As an example of how a jamaat functions, Leonora Jamaat is looked at more closely. The first Mosque of Leonora was built in 1910. The Ameer of the Leonora Jamaat is Ahmed Hamid (one of these co-authors), he is also the Director of Education and Da'wah of the Central Islamic Organisation of Guyana (CIOG). Its Deputy Ameer is Habeebur-Rahman Khan, who is also the Murshid (President) of the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT). The elected members of its Shura Council include a Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer, an Assistant Treasurer, and three members. Meetings are held monthly. The Ameer chairs all meetings. The Muezzin is a permanent member of the Shura Council. Elections are held every three years and supporters of CIOG and GIT are elected to office. The Jamaat has an active Muslim Youth Organization (MYO) that engages in games and tours of other jamaats. It has also an active women's group.

Classes in the Jamaat's Islamic school are held from Monday to Thursday from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The teachers are Noorani Hamid, student at the Guyana Islamic Institute (GII) and Habeebur-Rahman Khan. Classes for women are held on Sundays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The teachers are Ahmed Hamid and Nurool Hamid. Classes for the women of West Demerara are held on Mondays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. These classes are conducted by Shaykh A. Nizamudeen, Associate Director of Education of CIOG. Classes for the youth are

held on Wednesdays between Maghrib and Isha prayers. They are conducted by Ahmed Hamid. The Jamaat has a small library and members are free to borrow the books. CIOG hopes to establish a lending library in this Jamaat and a piece of land has been given to build an Islamic Vocational School financed by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The Islamic School building of this Jamaat is used by both CIOG and GIT.

Funds are collected by the Jamaat on a monthly basis. The last fund raising activity was held on November 3, 1994, and gathered over G\$ 100,000. A collection of G\$ 206,000 was made within the Jamaat to purchase new carpets during December 1994. Receipts are issued for all monies collected and annual audited financial statements are presented to the Jamaat membership. Leonora Jamaat other jamaats and Islamic organizations. For instance, Leonora Jamaat paid in 1994 G\$ 165,000 as Zakaat to CIOG. On the other hand, the poor and needy within the Leonora Jamaat are also assisted monthly by CIOG.

The Leonora Jamaat has its own wares to be used for functions within the Jamaat. It owns a transport for land 219x350 situate at Sea Spray, Leonora. On the land is a Masjid (40x40) and a two-flat school (60x30). It owns a grass cutting machine. It has also a concrete court for volleyball, tennis, basket ball, and a play section for children.

Leonora Jamaat observes Ashura, Isra and Mi'raj, and Shabe Baraat. It manages Ramadhan fasting and organizes 20 Rakat Tarawih prayers. It celebrates Eidul-Fitr, and collects Sadaqatul -Fitr and distributes to the poor and needy before Eid's day. The Jamaat celebrates Eidul-Adha and slaughters about 18 bulls, of which one third is parceled and distributed to the poor and needy.

Each Friday, before Jumu'ah prayers, the members of the Jamaat are briefed on important issues and given needed information. The Khutbah is delivered in Arabic and English. Presently, the Leonora Jamaat will vote a sum for improvement works of its buildings and

compounds. Men and women members of the Leonora Jamaat who emigrated overseas contribute regularly to its finances.

6 - Formation of National Organisation

Until the 1920's Muslims used to commemorate the martyrdom of Imaam Hussain with a celebration called Tazia, a Shia practice. After some time, Tazia celebrations became marked with rum drinking and immoral behavior. Soon, the Hindu rum-shop owners became the Tazia organizers. Dr. J.B. Singh used to spearhead this effort by organizing competitions among various groups of people from all parts of Guyana and the Hindus became associated with the Tazia Celebration. The latter started to be organized any time of the year that is agreeable to the sponsors, not necessarily in Muharram (40).

On the other hand, a Masjid at Mahaica was used to perform a post-mortem by a Christian doctor. These are two examples of how far away from Islam can lead the general ignorance of the Muslim masses.

In the 1920's, the first national Islamic organization was formed under the leadership of S.A. Nasir. It was named "The Islamic Association of British Guyana" (IABG) (40). IABG campaigned against Tazia celebrations and got the Government to ban it completely. It also campaigned the post-mortem in the Mahaica Masjid. The latter was closed down and the Muslims compensated. IABG also started Islamic education and lobbied for the respect of Islamic holidays in the country (40).

IABG campaigned against opening a Rum shop near a Mosque at Nom-Pariel. It was able to get the Government to honor Imams by calling them Moulvi. The State started to confirm Muslim marriages performed by Imams. Those below eighteen had to obtain the consent of their parents before their marriage could be legalized (40). The

urban middle class, businessmen and the educated among the Muslims assumed the IABG leadership.

IABG printed the first Muslim journal, Nur-E-Islam, which was widely circulated among Muslims. An examination of a few of its copies reveals that the articles were informative, well written and contain facts important to the history of Muslims in Guyana.

In 1934, "Jamiati-Ulama" was formed as a council of Imams. Its name was changed later to "Jamiyatul Ulama-e-Deen" and then to "Jamietul Ulama-e-Deen of Guyana" (JUDG). JUDG dealt with Fiqh issues and resolved differences among Imams, within families and in jamaats. It was highly respected and survived until today.

By the early 1930's, IABG went into decline. Then, some members of the Queenstown Jama Masjid mooted the idea of forming another national organization. Thus, on June 10, 1937, in a meeting in the said masjid, the Sadr-Anjuman-E-Islam of British Guyana (Anjuman) was established, under the supervision of Al-Haj Maulana Syed Shamsuddin bin Nizamud-din Al Hoseini, Qadin of Navasari, Bombay, India (42). The Maulana, while in Trinidad, was invited by a few Muslims to visit Guyana. On arrival, he was given much publicity and labeled "the 35th direct descendant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAS) through Hazrat Imam Zainul Abideen". In the inaugural meeting of the Anjuman were elected S.A. Sattaur as President, M. Azeem Khan and Abdool-Hack as Vice-President, and sixteen other office bearers (43).

The presence of the Maulana had an electric effect on the Muslims. His impressive credentials and lineage gave him immediately a position of authority and influence. The Anjuman founding members capitalized on his visit to whipped up support for the new association, and accompanied him in all his tours of the country.

From a small beginning, the Anjuman soon outgrew IABG. By the mid 1940's, it was recognized as the representative body of the Muslims of British Guiana since it had support in both Georgetown

and rural areas. Its activities included : arrangement for the burial of the destitute ; the erection in 1942 of a building to be used as its centre ; the establishment of Islamic schools in many jamaats, such as in Bush Lot, West Coast Berbice ; the establishment of Baitul-Mal as an Islamic fund ; the organization of visits to the sick in all public institutions ; the representation for passing a Muslim marriage and divorce bill ; the advocation for adult suffrage ; the foundation of twelve chapters in different parts of Guyana ; and the demand of social reforms to the Governor.

In 1945, the Anjuman made a successfull representation to the Government that all Muslim inmates in hospitals, almshouse and other public institutions should be served with halal food (44). The Anjuman also established the Shaheed Orphanages for boys and girls which catered for fifty to sixty children at any time over the years (43).

Thus, the Anjuman became responsible for the maintenance, upholding and perpetuation of Islam in British Guiana. It also wanted the Muslims to live peacefully, safeguard the interest the Ahlus-Sunnah-wal-Jamaah, and seek all Muslim rights.

In 1941, the IABG leadership, who were among the trustees of the Queenstown Masjid, came in confrontation with the Anjuman when the latter applied for the use of the Queenstown Masjid compound to conduct its Annual General Meeting. The Anjuman had supporters and executives among the membership of the Queenstown Jamaat. They opposed the trustees, withdrew from the Queenstown Masjid and constructed the Sadr Masjid in Kitty. The latter became the Anjuman headquarters.

Concerned Muslims realized that it was not in the best interest of the Muslims to have two national organizations competing for the support of the jamaats and their scarce resources and individually requesting Muslim rights from the Government. They felt that both organizations must be united. To this effect Anjuman's paper, Islam, wrote : "a place should be given to better understanding, cooperation

and concord among us, for until such esprit de corp can prevail we cannot boast of achieving anything among our Community".

Unity talks were initiated and a committee was formed to deal with the matter. Those who played a prominent role were Gool M. Khan (the Anjuman General Secretary), Ayube Edun, Moulvi M.A. Nasir and Al-Hajj S.M.S. Nasir (Attorney at Law). A joint meeting was held and negotiations concluded on February 28, 1949 at the Orphanage Building, Kitty. A five point agreement was drafted and signed by representatives of IABG and the Anjuman, and the journals, Nur-E-Islam and Islam, were fused and named "Islam and Nur E Islam". The name chosen for the emerging single organization was the "United Sadr Islamic Anjuman of British Guiana" (USIA).

Thus, the Muslims of Guyana reached their cherished aim of unity at national level in 1949. Until the early 1960's, the USIA was the effective representative body of the Guyanese Muslims. In 1961, it was incorporated under the laws of Guyana as representing Muslim interests (43).

In the beginning of the 1950's, the Independence Movement started in Guyana under the People's Progressive Party (PPP). Cheddi Jagan (an Indian Hindu) was the leader, and Forbes Burnham (an African Christian) was the Chairman. Most of the population were actively involved with this Independence Movement, including Muslims.

The USIA leaders were professionals with secondary and tertiary education and much experience. However, when the Independence Movement became divided in the early 1960's, the unity and stability enjoyed by the Muslims within USIA changed dramatically. Different USIA leaders started supporting contending political parties : Jagan's PPP, Burnham's People's National Congress (PNC) and the United Force (UF). With the PPP rise to power which espoused a Communist philosophy, Muslim businessmen and leaders were wooed by the UF and PNC. When the independence talks started at Lancaster House, England, Muslims then found themselves divided in the PPP, UF and

PNC camps. The USIA leadership was then wrested from Abdool Majeed, a businessman and UF elected chairman, by Mohamed Yacoob Ally who was backed by the PPP. This further aggravated the situation and divided the Muslims politically. The 1962 - 1964 racial disturbances polarized the two major race groups of Guyana and parties drew support along racial lines.

The period from 1964 to 1979 was probably the worse in the history Guyanese Muslims. They appeared leaderless, lost their prestige, honor and respect, and were used as a political pawns. They were divided into two political camps, PNC and PPP. In 1964, the PNC and UF coalesced to form the Government.

Muhammad Nissar, supported by the PNC, decided to upset Yacoob Ally at the General Elections of February 6, 1972, held at Enterprise, ECD, by occupying the venue overnight with his supporters. Yacoob Ally then switched the venue to Triumph No. 1 Masjid, ECD. Thus, two separate elections were held producing two sets of officers : the Nissar faction supported the PNC; and the Yacoob Ally faction supported the PPP. The USIA headquarters at Alexander Street, Kitty, continued to be occupied by Yacoob Ally. Muhammad Nissar established his headquarters in America Street, Georgetown.

Both Presidents of the two factions were elected to Parliament. The Guyana Muslims were ashamed to see their leaders going public on opposite sides on the same issue. Soon they realized that both leaders were not acting in the best interest of the Muslim Community and were controlled by political parties. Their eagerness to represent the views of their respective parties and to seek Muslim support for them resulted in disorder, disunity and stagnation within the Guyana Muslim Community.

Each group sought the support of the jamaats and wanted to control their activities. In 1967, USIA, Jamiatul-Ulama-E-Deen and Anjuman Hifaztul-Islam tried without success to discourage Maulana Shah

Ahmed Noorani from visiting Guyana by cabling that should he come there would be violence. In 1968, USIA expressed dissatisfaction when Maulana Fazlur-Rahman Ansari gave a lecture at City Hall pointing out the evils of Communism. On December 14 - 16, 1973, M. Ali Kettani of Morocco and Inamullah Khan of Pakistan tried hard to settle the rift in the USIA, but to no avail. Each time efforts were made to settle the USIA dispute, it was Yacoob Ally's faction that held out, withdrew or failed to honor its commitment.

Eventually, Nissar's faction became defunct when he emigrated to Canada. The remaining Yacoob Ally's faction became greatly diminished and utterly unrepresentative of the Guyana Muslim Community. The latter returned to its pre-1949 situation, when no single Islamic organization represented them nationally. In order to vote in USIA meetings, one must have contributed his set membership fees. USIA in collecting funds stopped issuing receipts in the name of USIA to the non-supporters of those in office, they did instead in the name of USIA's Boys' Orphanage.

Throughout this troubled period, USIA (Yacoob faction) was supported by JUDG, leading to its fall as well, and Hifazul-Islam. In 1983, Yacoob Ally emigrated to the USA and was succeeded as USIA President by Hajji Abdool-Rahaman (1931 - 1993), a sincere Muslim who saved USIA from total disappearance. In 1985, USIA openly withdrew its PPP support and became politically neutral. At present, USIA does a fine job in managing the Boys and Girls orphanages and other welfare efforts. Since the passing away of Al-Hajj Abdool-Rahaman on 25 August 1993, the new USIA President became his son, Hajji Hafiz Rahaman. JUDG remained closely affiliated to USIA. Its present President is Hajji Abdul-Razack. It has since a long time became of small influence in the affairs of the Muslims of Guyana.

In the late 1940's, the youth of Ruimveldt Masjid became involved in sport. They reasoned that Muslim youth all over British Guiana needed to be organized. Thus, in 1948 the Muslim Youth Organization

(MYO) of Ruimveldt was formed with (later Justice) Akbar Khan as its first President. At one time MYO also had a female President, Justina Khan. In the 1960's, MYO founding members played a significant role in Guyanese politics and Muslim affairs. Eventually, similar MYO's were established in other jamaats. They united into the "British Guiana Muslim Youth Organization" (BGMYO) and in 1956 became affiliated to USIA. After independence, BGMYO became the "Muslim Youth Organization of Guyana" (MYOG). Its constitution makes allowances for individual membership and that of local jamaat MYO's.

At first, BGMYO had no "club house" like other sports organizations, but their application to the Government for the lease of a land-filled area was successful. The land offered to them was in Wolford Avenue, Thomas Lands, Georgetown, the present MYOG headquarters. They first built a shack on this land, and as the structure improved, it reached its present impressive dimensions.

Over the years, MYOG mainly concentrated on organizing competitive sports between the local MYO's, present in different jamaats. In 1967, MYOG sent a 19-member youth team to Trinidad to engage in sports and Islamic activities. MYOG went also into crisis with the split of USIA.

7 - Crisis of Muslim Organization in Guyana

The disaster in the USIA and its affiliates, Jamiatul-Ulama-E-Deen, MYOG and Anjuman Hifazatul-Islam of West Demerara, resulted in the formation of new organizations. Except for the Muslim League and the Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG, 1960), they all were formed during the 1964 - 1979 period. Among them are :

- 1) Guyana Council of Islamic Brotherhood (GCIB) ;
- 2) Islamic Needy Fund (INF) ;

- 3) Berbice Islamic Sunnatul-Anjuman (BISA) ;
- 4) Al-Ansar of West Demerara ;
- 5) Upper Corentyne Islamic Cultural Organisation (ICO) ;
- 6) The General Council of Islamic Brotherhood ;
- 7) The Muslim Coordinating Council (MCC) ;
- 8) The Hifazatul-Islam of West Demerara ;
- 9) Essequibo's Muslim Brotherhood Association ; and
- 10) The East Coast Muslim Association in East Demerara.

In the following some detail is given about some of these organizations and their situation at present.

Guyana Council of Islamic Brotherhood (GCIB)

One of the Muslim groups who failed to resolve the USIA dispute, led by D. Deen, a stall-holder in the Stabroek Market, decided to establish a new organization in their effort to serve Muslims. They formed the "Guyana Council of Islamic Brotherhood" (GCIB), with a strong Georgetown base. Within a short while, GCIB became known throughout Guyana. It became involved mainly in education and da'wah. It also sought association with the Islamic Missionaries Guild of Trinidad and hosted in Guyana one of its international conferences.

When O. Deen migrated to North America, he was succeeded as GCIB President by A.K. Juman Yassin, an Attorney-at-Law. Under this leadership, GCIB received international recognition. It selected Imams to attend a Muslim World League (MWL) conference in Trinidad, received financial support for its program, and paid off for its building situated in Thomas Street, Georgetown.

However, some GICB executive members had personal political views which they did not refrain from openly expressing in the GICB official organ. Thus, GCIB membership became divided on certain issues. When Juman Yassin was removed from office and replaced with Hajji Sheik A. Karim, disagreements intensified and the Vice-President was physically assaulted by the President and had to be

hospitalized. Hajji Sheik A. Karim was deemed unwanted. The move to remove him from office involved Muslim politicians, PNC parliamentarian and USIA officials who supported the PNC. Police was also present at the elections. The results of the elections were challenged and the judge appointed a committee to oversee new elections which were never held to this date, many years later. The GCIB property has been closed and is rapidly been destroyed by termites. Every attempt to open the building has been vehemently opposed by a GCIB group including Sheik A. Karim. The latter formed the "Islamic Research and Propagation Center" (IRPC), which over three years produced only two editions of its newspaper, Muslim News. The GCIB "strong men" still hope to take over and to construct a new building.

Only those GCIB members who paid their membership fees can vote and be elected. At present, GCIB is very dormant. The possibility for it to play any meaningful role in Guyana seems remote, since Muslims have withdrawn their support to it and have given it to more dynamic groups. In the event it is reorganized, it will have to seek affiliation with one such groups.

Islamic Needy Fund (INF)

The Islamic Needy Fund (INF) began as a jamaat project, but in the absence of any national attention to the poor and needy, it expanded with the support of many other jamaats across Guyana. INF main task is to collect funds during Ramadan and disburse assistance to the poor. The INF Executive members were drawn mainly from the Alexander Village Masjid, its headquarters. The Executive Committee of this Masjid manages the funds.

At a meeting on March 17, 1979, at Queenstown Annexe, Georgetown, several organizations expressed concern over INF continued existence after the formation of the "Central Islamic Organization of Guyana" (CIOG) which started the same service nationally. Today, the service provided by INF has been greatly

reduced since its collection nets less than one million Guyanese dollars (US 6,500). The system used by CIOG has overshadowed INF. At present, the latter is dormant and faces serious internal problems. The INF Chairman, Sattaur Gafoor, a prominent businessman, has given indication of his desire for closer cooperation between INF and CIOG.

Berbice Islamic Sunnatul-Anjuman (BISA)

Berbice Islamic Sunnatul Anjuman (BISA) was formed in the mid 1960's. Berbicians and Essequibians always felt that too many activities are concentrated in Demerara. BISA was formed as an independent organization to serve Berbician Muslims.

Initially, BISA had their full support, but problems arose when plans were formulated for the establishment of the BISA Complex. Upper Corentyne Muslims wanted the Complex to be sited in Corriverton and they made available for this purpose a parcel of land. The Bisa Executive members, mainly from Central Corentyne, applied successfully for a plot of land at Whim. The decision was finally taken to build the Complex at Whim. Then, the Upper Corentyne Muslims withdraw from BISA and contemplated building their own Complex at Skeldorf, now marked for the CIOG Vocational School financed by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

The Whim area has few Muslims, and over the years the Complex has been hardly used and is poorly maintained. It is now falling apart. BISA itself has been reduced to a family affair. Around 1980, BISA secured a sizeable agricultural piece of land. As this land has not been used, BISA may now lose title to it. BISA does not receive now much cooperation from the local jamaats, as they object to the behavior of its leaders. The Central Corentyne area is Islamically dormant, and more activity is going on at the other two ends of Berbice, Corriverton and New Amsterdam.

BISA was able to establish contacts with influential Islamic international organizations. The BISA General Secretary, Hajji Sultan

Hafiz, was appointed by the MWL (Saudi Arabia) in its meeting in Trinidad as a representative of the Islamic Conference of South America and the Caribbean (ICSAC). Such appointment had no effect in reviving BISA. ICSAC itself is no more than a paper organization.

Al-Ansar of West Demerara

Al-Ansar, formed in 1972 and named after Al-Ansar of Madinah, never sought to be recognized as an organization representing Muslims. Its main role was to provide social services, mainly in West Demerara and East Essequibo. Members were carefully elected and had to make each a monthly contribution of G 5 (then US 2). It also organized fund raising dinners. It was the first organization to print calendars locally, containing Islamic information on months, moon and observances.

Al-Ansar supported openly the formation of CIOG, and readily dissolved itself to join it. The top members emigrated to North America while other members joined CIOG.

Upper Corentyne Islamic Cultural Organization (ICO)

The Islamic Cultural Organization (ICO) of Upper Corentyne had a short life. It was formed in opposition to BISA to serve the Muslims of Berbice. It was also successful in securing as a grant a parcel of land to build its center. ICO is now defunct. It may re-emerge because of the move made by Jamaat No. 78 and the Skeldon Jamaat, Corentyne, to take over the ICO land, which is now sited to build the CIOG Vocational School mentioned above.

The Muslim Coordinating Council (MCC)

Three attempts have been made in establishing a Muslim Coordinating Council (MCC) in Guyana. The first was at an Islamic conference held in September 1977, sponsored by MWL, when a document was signed by the two USIA factions and several other Guyanese Muslim organizations whereby they agreed to "unite our efforts for the purpose of the preservation and promotion of Islam by forming a coordinating council of Islamic bodies...". Soon afterwards,

one leader resigned from the agreement, followed by others. Thus, HCC was still-born.

The second attempt to form MCC occurred during a visit to Guyana by MWL officials for the opening of the BISA Complex at Whim, Corentyne. An agreement was signed by the two USIA factions at the Libyan Embassy on February 22, 1978. Ahmed Ihwaas, the then Libyan Charge d'Affaires in Guyana, was instrumental in encouraging several organizations to take part. At the onset, this new MCC was given a MWL grant. This time, MCC continued to function for a few years. However, at one of its meetings, its Chairman was assaulted and had to be hospitalized. This hastened the demise of the organization.

The third attempt was made in Trinidad. This time, there was strong resistance by several organizations as it was clear that the new MCC will be dominated by one or two groups. USIA provoked other organizations by making unacceptable demands, and walked out when they were refused. After several meetings, a draft constitution was presented and Azam Mohamed was elected MCC Secretary. When those who originally suggested to include certain clauses in the constitution, object to them, interest started to wane in MCC. These clauses dealt with the declaration of assets and submission of plans. This was the last meeting, and MCC just disappeared.

The Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG)

In 1960, the national Islamic organization of Trinidad was the Aujuman Sunnatul-Jamaat Association (ASJA) (and still is). In Guyana it was USIA. When the late Maulana Fazlur-Rahman Ansari of Pakistan visited Trinidad, he advised on the formation of the Islamic Missionaries Guild (IMG) as an arm of Da'wah for both ASJA and USIA. The IMG became very active. But soon it started to show independent tendencies and caused ASJA to be highly concerned. Eventually, the rift between ASJA leadership and those active in IMG grew bigger. The differences could not be resolved and the IMG broke

away from ASJA. As a result Maulana Ansari dissociated himself from IMG.

Then, IMG assumed a regional role, using as its name the "IMG of the Caribbean and South America". It organized a conference in 1967 in Trinidad where Muslim representatives from Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Barbados, Jamaica and Grenada were present. IMG conducted its activities in Guyana, Trinidad, and a few small Caribbean islands well. The IMG President was Hajji Nasir A. Khan of Guyana.

Soon, differences emerged within IMG and nationalism was the divisive element. These differences reached Trinidadian courts and the case was won by Trinidadian Muslims. They retained the name and whatever assets IMG had in Trinidad. The IMG Guyana branch lost valuable assets as a result of the Trinidadian Court decision and became almost dormant. Today, it still uses the name but has long ceased to make any input in Islamic affairs or influence events in Guyana.

During its active period, IMG-Guyana mainly addressed itself to education and Da'wah. It secured the services of an Egyptian Alim, Sheikh Abdus-Salam, to teach Arabic, and managed the Muslim Trust College. It also introduced the first Arab Hafiz in Guyana. It conducted radio programs and printed its own journal, the "Torch of Islam". It organized Hajj visits and even gave grants to certain Islamic schools. It also influenced the Government to print a stamp in 1967 to mark the 1400th anniversary of the revelation of the Qur'an in Ramadhan.

IMG-Guyana had the opportunity of replacing USIA as it was very active and could mobilize Muslims, but for some reason it failed to do so. Some attribute its failure to its constitutional structure. Its President, Hajji Nasir A. Khan, spent long periods of time overseas. The absences were many and too long for the organization not to suffer.

8 - Ahmed Ihwaas and Islamic Revival in Guyana

In the middle of the crisis of the Guyanese Muslim Community in the late 1970's, a man arrived from abroad. By his action he changed with time the entire situation and initiated a true Islamic revival in Guyana. This was the late Ahmed Ibrahim Ihwaas, the then Libyan Charge d'Affaires to Guyana. He had served in the Libyan Diplomatic corps in many countries and was a Major in the Libyan Army. During his foreign service, since 1969, he had contacts with several influential Muslims and Islamic movements, especially the Islamic Brotherhood.

To understand the importance Ahmed Ihwaas in Guyana, it is imperative to understand Guyana at the time of his arrival and the consequences of his subsequent actions. Guyanese Muslims were disorganized and divided at the National level and their knowledge of Islam was negligible. Islamic education was only given at the local mosque. The Islamic school, a Mosque annex was used only to teach children rudimentary Arabic and to sing Urdu songs. Hence, the Muslim masses were ignorant of Islam. Only a few had some amount of Islamic knowledge, primarily by reading books. Guyanese Muslims were fully Anglicized and Creolized.

The only remnants of Islamic culture was the architecture of the Mosques and the Pakistani Kurta and Pyjama (shirt and pants) worn by old men attending the Mosques. No woman was wearing hijab, or for that matter allowed in the Mosques. Though Muslims were over 12% of the total population and had great economic strength, their position in the country was very weak and were used by politicians. Their division at the National level reflected the same division at the Jamaat level. Moreso, leaders of these jamaats acquired their positions not on merit, but because of wealth and heredity.

Muslim masses had no say in running the jamaat affairs. Each Jamaat became an independent entity governed by the Imaam for religious matters and a Committee of Management for its upkeep and

other matters. The groups that arose to represent Muslims were generally organized on secular lines with a leadership devoid of any Islamic education. There were many Muslim organizations but little Islam. The cinema became the past time of Muslims. Through it, a new kind of permissive culture became dominant among Muslims, especially the youth. With the cinema showing Indian, Western and Chinese films, progressively increasing in themes of violence and sex, a corrupt and immoral society was in the making.

So when Ahmed Ihwaas landed in Guyana in 1977, the situation was very bleak for Islam and Muslims. This was his own comment on the situation : "My conclusion is that the Muslims of Guyana are a neglected quantity having no influence on the political, social and economic fronts and even on the educational and intellectual fronts ; or rather, their influence does not accord with their numbers".

Ahmed Ihwaas made use of his influence and position to establish contact with Muslims at different levels in the society. The raging disunity among Muslims organizations, their composition, policies, and their conception of the role of an Islamic organization in Guyana did not give any base for the possibility of improvement nor any possibility to work with them usefully. Ihwaas decided to form a new group of Islamic workers.

Immediately on assessing the situation, Ihwaas started to visit various Mosques in the country and to meeting people, especially the youth. He carefully selected the youth, mainly students, and exposed them to a type of Islamic education and training never experienced before in Guyana. To promote this program, he imported Islamic books in English and circulated them widely. He established study circles and classes in different parts of Guyana. The books distributed, the education and training offered, the discussions and issues analyzed, all definitely aimed at changes in the Guyanese Muslim society. Most adult local Muslims did not feel that any change was necessary and believed that some conflicted with the Hanafi Mazhab.

Ihwaas was invited by some Muslim students to give a talk at a program commemorating the Prophet's Birthday at a secondary school in Georgetown. Afterwards, he organized some youths and started to have weekly study-sessions on Islam. The first study group he organized included Naseeb Khan, Faisal Baksh, Imtiaz Zaman, Abdool-Aleem, Faisal Hamid and Imtiaz Ali. After some time, Ahmed Ihwaas started to organize monthly youth camps at various Mosques and vocational courses during school holidays. Soon, for the first time in the history of Guyanese Muslims, young boys and girls were praying five times daily and were educated in Islam. By 1979, classes were initiated in different parts of Guyana educating and training the Muslim youth on the basics of Islam.

In 1979, Ahmed Ihwaas and his wife, Ameenah, along with Halimah John of St. Vincent, started weekly study sessions and monthly camps for Muslim girls. In 1980, courses started to be organised also for Muslim girls. Soon, these activities were expanded to various parts of the country.

Ahmad Ihwaas left Guyana in January, 1981. He became involved with the opposition to the Libyan Regime. He was gunned down at the Chad-Libyan border by Libyan Security Forces in May, 1983.

Ihwaas work had a great impact on the development of Muslims and Islam in Guyana. Most of what is happening presently in Guyana can be traced in its genesis to Ihwaas. In a mark of respect to him the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) produced a booklet on him entitled "A Tribute To Our Martyr".

9 - The Rebirth of National Organizations : CIOG and GIT CIOG :

In 1976, Guyana's Government, under Burnham, wanted to make National Service compulsory for all Guyanese youth, male and female. They had to leave their homes and spend two years in the

interior of the country, where they would be involved in agriculture, military and vocational training. Muslims then feared that their children be involved in immorality, eat haram food and be indoctrinated in Marxism. They gathered at the Queenstown Mosque in Georgetown and led their protest. Burnham sent troops to the Mosque, but there was no casualty. Later, Muslims were backed by Christian churches and other religious and social groups. Soon afterward, the Government recanted and made National Service voluntary (45). In front of this situation, the USIA factions were important in defending Muslim rights or expressing Muslim views.

During the meeting on February 22, 1978, at the Libyan Embassy mentioned above, an agreement was signed by the two USIA factions. They agreed to hold a joint election for the USIA office bearers, and by consent Hajji Mansoor Nasir was appointed Returning Officer. This agreement was never implemented.

Seeing the disintegration the Muslim Community at the national level, a small group of concerned Muslims (the Group) met in Georgetown in February 1979, to discuss the pathetic situation of the Muslims. They were Mansoor Nasir, Fazeel Feroze, Sultan Rahaman, Hajji Shakoor, Moeen Mc Doom, Azam Mazarally and Ayube Mc Doom (46).

Concerned over the continuing USIA split, the Group resolved to make determined efforts to bring it to an end. Hajji Mansoor Nasir was approached with a view to ascertaining from him whether he would accept to be USIA President, as he was highly respected by the entire Muslim Community of Guyana. Hajji Mansoor Nasir, in a written statement dated February 13, 1979, confirmed his willingness to serve as USIA President if that were the unanimous desire of the Guyanese Muslim Community, and provided that USIA remains the only central Muslim organization of Guyana. A meeting was held at the Indian Education Trust Building on February 20, 1979. It was

attended by both USIA factions. The Nissar faction, as a compromise, supported the proposal. The Yacoob Ally faction declined to do so.

The Group then called a meeting of all Guyanese Islamic organizations. It was held on March 17, 1979, in the Queenstown Mosque Annexe, Church Street, Georgetown. Of the 16 known organizations, 12 attended, including one USIA faction, which however withdrew before the conclusion of the meeting. After full review of the state of affairs in the Muslim Community and of the unsuccessful efforts made over many years to resolve the dispute between the two USIA factions, a resolution was unanimously passed approving in principle the formation of a new central organization upon confirmation of its support by a majority of the jamaats. Eighty-eight jamaats approved a resolution that a new central Islamic organization should be formed, but should not be involved in national politics. Because of its historic importance, the text of the resolution is set out hereunder :

"Where as it is widely acknowledged that there is a great and urgent need for the Muslim Community in Guyana to be represented by a single central organization.

And whereas efforts started in 1972, and renewed recently, to bring about the merger of the two factions of the United Sadr Islamic Anjuman and to hold joint elections of office bearers have proved unsuccessful.

And whereas there does not seem to be any prospect of an early end to the current litigation over the issue of election of office bearers of the Guyana United Sadr Islamic Anjuman, and there is no certainty that further litigation thereover will not ensue.

And whereas this state of affairs has for many years been and is still adversely affecting the interests of the Muslim Community and should not be allowed to continue any longer.

Be it resolved by this meeting of representatives of Muslim organizations subscribing hereto that the formation of a new central

organization be approved in principle, and that such an organization be formed as soon as possible upon confirmation by a majority of the jamaats in Guyana of their support for such a new central organization".

The new organization, with the main aim of representing the interests of Guyanese Muslims, was named the "Central Islamic Organization of Guyana" (CIOG). On July 15, 1979, over 5,000 Muslims gathered at the Bishop High School in Georgetown and elected Mansoor Nasir as CIOG President (46). Its present President (1995) is Fazeel Feroze, a pharmacist.

First, CIOG had to undertake the task of rebuilding the Muslim Community of Guyana and carefully analyze and prioritize its needs. However, CIOG inherited a multitude of problems that engaged its full attention for the first five years of its life. It had to reorganize the Muslims, regain their lost prestige, honor and respect, instill self-confidence, and strive for their unity. These were not easy tasks to achieve. Guyana Muslims gave their full support to CIOG, and ceased to be apathetic.

Among the leadership of CIOG were those who worked with USIA, MYOG, Al-Amar, Hifaz, IMG, GCIB, BISA, and practically all other Guyanese Islamic organizations. They were familiar with the routine old-fashioned organizational procedure. However, CIOG required innovative changes in structure strategies to achieve its objectives and goals.

For educational training, CIOG used the services of Sheikh Gulshair Shukri (a Guyanese then residing in Trinidad), Darul-Ifta (Saudi Arabia) da'i, Sheikh Baskalillah Khan, MWL da'i, and Maulana Muhammad Safee who left in 1981 to join the Islamic Call Society (Libya). In 1981, CIOG selected 17 Imams for training at Darul-Ifta six week course in Trinidad.

Between 1979 and 1985, CIOG concentrated on building its foundations, winning and retaining the support of the jamaats, and

taking specific measures to benefit Muslims. It attended to the problems of the jamaats, and encouraged Muslims to become more involved. The CIOG activities were not restricted to an exclusive membership. It was open to all Guyanese Muslims.

Since 1985, CIOG moved at rapid pace to set out its task meticulously and systematically. This involved :

- 1) National collection and disbursement of zakat (the zakat budget for 1995 is GD 12 million or about US\$ 80,000) ;
- 2) Education, including courses ; seminars ; training of Imams, Islamic teachers, community leaders, youth and women; helping in the preparation of national exams ; organizing Qur'anic competitions; distributing Islamic literature and khutbah books; conducting classes and study circle ; establishing vocational schools with the help of IDB ; and giving scholarship and study grants ;
- 3) Social services including feeding programs and distribution of clothes ;
- 4) Financial assistance to Mosques, Islamic schools and Muslim individuals ;
- 5) Representation in the name of the Guyanese Muslim Community to the Government and to non-Governmental organizations, such as the request for the appointment of Muslim Marriage officers ;
- 6) Establishment of the Muslim Multi-Purpose Coop Society ;
- 7) Establishment of a women chapter, the National Committee for Sisters' Affairs (NACOSA) ;
- 8) Medical out-reach programs ;
- 9) Hearse service for the burial of destitute Muslims ; and
- 10) Orphans and needy children sponsorship.

CIOG publishes a monthly periodical called Al-Bayan. It also produced two levels of Islamic school programs.

Thus, CIOG evolved as the representative body of the Muslims of Guyana. During 1992, it played a significant role in the formation of the Election Assistance Bureau (EAB) and assisted in no small measure to restore democracy in Guyana. CIOG is still growing and needs more qualified personnel.

CIOG holds annual meetings to which are invited two representatives from each jamaat in Guyana. It affords the Muslims a transparency of accounts and annual audited financial statements are produced. Its regional personnel are elected by the Muslims of each of the ten CIOG administrative regions encompassing Guyana. The CIOG Executive Committee is elected for five years. Guyanese Muslims have the power to formulate CIOG policies and to change its leadership.

GIT

In 1978, Ahmed Ihwaas established the Guyana Islamic Trust (GIT) as a service organization with the youth he trained. These proved to be enthusiastic and willing to learn and to work. Like youth anywhere, they wanted change. Their exposure to Islamic knowledge gave them the advantage of opposing what they saw as not in accordance with Qur'an and sunnah. While they possessed a knowledge that over 80% of the Imams and leaders in Guyana did not have, they lacked the experience to effect changes and deal with sensitive issues. The points they objected to did not concern major principles and could have been accommodated. Some of these are Youman-Nabi (a National holiday in Guyana), Isra and Mi'raj, Shabe Baraat, Ashura and other minor mazhab differences.

However, despite the difficulties, GIT was able to institute numerous changes, to assist in raising the standard of Islamic education and to give the Muslim population a better understanding of

Islam. As an example, GIT introduced the habit of wearing Hijab in Guyana, and most its female members wear it.

GIT uses the model of concentric circles in its administration to ensure it has the right persons in the right places. Thus, it is capable to choose workers on the basis of education and ability. Its leaders are scattered in many jamaats and are active on a voluntary, part-time or full-time basis, to disseminate Islamic education and training. GIT activities grew rapidly in the first seven years (1978 - 1985) of its life as it was able to secure the support of the youth. It used different methods, such as excursions, games and visits, to attract and absorb new members. It created a women arm (NISA) and founded the Guyana Islamic Institute (GII) to offer Islamic education. By 1980, GIT divided Guyana into four administrative zones in order to manage its activities more effectively.

In 1980 - 1982, two one-year Islamic training courses, attended by young Muslim from various parts of the Caribbean, were planned and executed. The graduates from these courses became the catalyst for future Islamic development of Guyana and the Caribbean. Thus, genuine Islamic education started to pervade Guyana, hijab and beards became common, social welfare programs were initiated, an Islamic bookstore was established at the GIT headquarters, sporting activities were planned and executed, nuzhas (picnics) were organized, cultural programs were executed, Islamic plays were staged, Islamic songs, poems and short stories were written and sung, trained cadres of Islamic workers (boys and girls) became available, Africans were returning to Islam partly through the efforts of the trainees of Ahmed Ihwaas, and Islamic revival in Guyana started.

In 1986, GIT established the Guyana Islamic Institute (GII) as an institution higher learning. It has attracted about 50 participants at a time from the Caribbean. Presently, students from the UK and Ghana are also attending. Its present director, Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Khan, is a graduate of the Islamic University of Medina (Saudi Arabia).

In 1992, GIT inaugurated a pilot project on an Islamic Nursery School. Over 40% of the attendees were non-Muslims. At their last graduation in 1994, the parents of these children expressed their appreciation for the good work of the School. As the Government plans to reform the law allowing private schools, GIT is preparing to open more nursery, primary and secondary schools.

The present GIT Murhid (President) is Habeebur-Rahman Khan. The past Murshid was Sheikh Roouf Zaman, a Graduate of Aleemia University (India) and Al-Azhar University in Cairo (Egypt).

CIOG and MYOG

In 1979, MYOG supported the formation of CIOG and placed its building at its disposal. It even granted office space to house its secretariat. Also, GIT held its two one-year courses in then and tabishi Jamaat plans to hold its 1995 conference in the MYOG building, the Tablighi Jamaat plans to hold its 1995 Conference in it. MYOG provides social services in its building, which is also used for religious functions by Muslims. Daral-Ifta (Saudi Arabia), the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO) and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) all made use of the MYOG Building. Many CIOG programs, in the social, economic, religious and educational fields, are jointly sponsored with MYOG. The present MYOG President Fazeel, is also CIOG President.

CIOG and GIT

Between 1979 and 1982, GIT cooperated with CIOG as did other Muslim organizations in Guyana. But this situation did not last long. The Hifazatul-Islam and Ulama-E-Deen withdrew and returned to the USIA on the grounds that CIOG was Wahhabi, because it was associated with Ahmed Ihwaas and GIT. BISA refused to support CIOG because, according to its General Secretary, Sultan Hafiz, it did not support his bid in 1980 to win the USIA presidency. As Ahmad Ihwaas left Guyana, his unifying effort was missed.

Differences between CIOG and GIT arose because of a dispute with MYOG of which Hajji Fazeel Ferouz was President. In 1982, GIT decided to transfer its one-year course from MYOG Building to the Foreman Building because of constant disagreements with MYOG members. There was a slight delay as contention arose between GIT and MYOG on who owned assets such as wares and beds. MYOG proposed sharing them, but GIT refused. The bitterness between GIT and MYOG was transferred to CIOG. It intensified when GIT declared itself an independent organization.

During his visit to Guyana in 1995, Dr. M. Ali Kettani called a meeting between the Executive Committees of both CIOG and GIT. It was held on 20/1/1995 at the MYOG Building. An agreement was signed between the two organizations for coordinating their future work for the best interest of the Muslim Community of Guyana.

10 - Mosques in Guyana

In the 1850's, the Indian Muslims of Guyana started to use open spaces for congregational prayers (37). It is difficult to state at which place they started. By 1865, they began to organize themselves around the local mosque in their respective communities. The mosque started as a regular place for evening discussions (47).

The first mosques were built either from mud and grass (tapi) or wattle wood and covered with palm leaves and had mud floors (47). As the Muslims developed financially, they replaced their mosques with wooden structures. These were later replaced with concrete buildings. The first concrete masjid in Guyana was built at Mc Doom Village, East Bank Demerara. There is agreement with regard to the first masjid built in Guyana. Some say it was built at Philadelphia and later removed to Vergenoegen, East Bank Essequibo. Others say that it was built at No. 78 Village, Corriverton, Berbice.

To these mosques were added madrasahs (Islamic schools) to cater for the religious education of Muslim children. There, they were taught to read the Qur'an and to learn the pillars of Islam, in addition to the words and meanings the Kalima (Islamic declaration of faith) and Urdu songs.

Though the Muslims were not educated in Arabic, Urdu or Islamic studies, they succeeded in maintaining their faith by clinging on to rudiments of faith and congregating on the Prophet's Birthday (48), the Eids and Qur'anic recitation functions (49).

In 1883, the oldest mosque that survived until today with the same structure, an open air mosque, was built at Cumberland, Berbice (50). Today, it is used only for Eid prayers. The Old Masjid in Alexander Village (Georgetown) was started in 1885. The Albion Masjid in Berbice, was started in 1895. It has been renovated since then five times, the last was inaugurated on Sunday, January 15, 1995, in the presence of the CIOG President, Hajji Fazeel Feroze, Dr. M Ali Kettani of Morocco, and the Prime Minister of Guyana, Samuel A. Hinds. The Queenstown Jama Mosque, Georgetown, was also built in 1895. Its first Imam returned to India. There are several other mosques that are over 100 years old.

In 1893, there were 29 Mosques in Guyana. In 1917, there were 46. Today (1995), there are about 130 mosques in Guyana, scattered along the coastline, from Crabwood in the West to the East bank of the Pomeroon River, Essequibo, in the East ; from Georgetown in the North to Linden, Vreedenhoop and Patentia (WBD) in the South ; and the solitary Masjid at Bartica, 70 km up the Essequibo River. Some mosques do not have a functioning Islamic School. In some cases, the Mosque is opened only once a week. The growth in the number of mosques in Guyana is shown in Table 10.1 and their distribution in 1995 is shown in Table 10.2.

Table 10.1 : Growth in the Number of Mosques in Guyana

Year	Number of Mosques
1893	29
1917	46
1979	110
1995	130

Table 10 : Distribution of Mosques in Guyana in 1995

Region	No. of Mosques
Demerara-Mahaica	35
East Berbice-Corentyne	30
Essequibo Ilds-West Demerara	30
Mahaica-Berbice	20
Pomeroon-Supenam	12
Upper Demarara-Berbice	2
Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo	0
Barima-Waini	0
Cuyuni-Mezaruni	1
Potaro-Siparuni	0
Guyana	130

Each mosque in Guyana is an independent entity. It is governed by an Imam, who in most cases is in charge of only the religious affairs of the Community, and an elected Executive Committee who looks after its maintenance. The Mosque is the seat of the local jamaat.

Most mosques have an annex which is used for educating Muslim children in reciting Qur'an, performing Ibadat and learning other

aspects of Islam. Both GIT and CIOG have developed curricula for this purpose. Today, many Guyanese Muslim can recite Qur'an according to the rules of Tajweed. This was unknown before the arrival of the late Ahmed Ihwaas to Guyana. Today, mosques are also being used to educate the youth and the adults, men and women, although many mosques still lag behind. Some mosques provide sporting facilities for the youth and social functions for women. A few mosques offer vacational Islamic courses during school holidays.

The existence of a mosque is a signal of the presence of Muslims and the establishment of Islam in Guyana. Usually, the estate does not hesitate to grant the Muslims land on which to build their mosque. The prosperous estates (some of which were abandoned) where the Muslim population was sizeable were the first to build mosques.

Not all estates have mosques, so on the two Eids, Muslims have to travel by foot to other to far-away villages where a mosque is found. As the number of Muslims in an estate increases, funds are available, and having someone among them who could perform the duties of Imam, a mosque is built and a new jamaat is established. Thus, within a short period, many new mosques were built. The construction of mosques under such conditions is supported by Muslims on other estates. For example, the Muslims of Uitvlugt and other areas used to walk using the railway track to Philadelphia Mosque for Eid prayers. In 1910, the Uitvlugt Mosque was built, followed by the Leonora and Stewartville Mosques a year or two later.

Jamaats were originally formed and mosques built in the sugar estates. Modernization dictated that these estates create nuclear housing schemes for their workers and remove the logies. This necessitated the removal of mosques to other sites, close to or within the housing schemes. In some cases, there were mosques already in existence in these sites. In others, when Muslims occupied new lands, mosques were also built. For instance, four mosques were built in the Black Bush Polder, Corentyne, Berbice. This polder, covering a

distance of 35 km in a straight line from East to West, was developed in the 1960's as an agricultural expansion project. However, its Muslim population remained small. By the 1960's, most nuclear housing schemes were established and the number of their mosques remained fixed.

There were other reasons why new mosques are built. For instance, Muslims living in Hague Settlement, West Coast Demerara, said that their absence from the Mosque situated north of the West Coast Highway, at about 3.5 km from the last Muslim home in Hague settlement, was due to long work hours, bad road condition, inclement weather and large distance. The reasons were accepted and a mosque was built in Hague Settlement in 1975. In 1995, its Islamic School building is being destroyed by termites and is inhabited by bats, marabunta, owls and insects. Prayers are not offered in congregation five times daily in Hague Settlement Mosque, the appointed Imam lives next door but on Friday there is problem to have a jamaat. The Mosque is in a state of disrepair while the jamaat is inactive.

The case of Crabwood Creek Mosque is quite different. When No. 78 Muslims rebuilt their mosque, the wooden structure was carefully dismantled and reconstructed at Crabwood Creek. A few years ago, Crabwood Creek built a concrete mosque and the wooden structure was returned to No. 78 Jamaat and used to build the Islamic School at Springlands. Crabwood Creek Mosque is always full and its jamaat is very active.

Mosques built as a result of disputes can be placed under three categories : constitutional ; political ; and juridic.

The Queenstown Jama Masjid is governed by a Board of Trustees of appointed members functioning in accordance with the Trust Deed. The Sadr-Anjuman-E-Islam applied for the use of the Masjid compound to hold its Annual General Meeting on February 2, 1941. This resulted in a series of correspondence between the Mosque Board and the Anjuman. The result was a complete withdrawal of the

membership of the Anjuman from Queenstown Masjid and the construction of another mosque in Sandy Balib Street, Kitty. The Anjuman reported these events as follows :

"It should be noted that the erection of this New Mosque (Kitty Sadr Mosque) was due directly to the provision of certain unalterable roles and restrictions made by those autocratic Trustees of the Queenstown Mosque, and that, notwithstanding repented requests for a change of those roles, the Trustees unblushingly refused to acknowledge their intellectual mistake, and suggested instead the Anjuman could please itself" (53).

Windsor Forest (WCD) with a small population of Muslims has two mosques. In 1967, allegations were made against the Imam, and under pressure he resigned and then went to Hajj. On his return, many members of the jamaat requested that he be reinstated and the present Imam be made his deputy. The Anjuman Hifaztul-Islam intervened in the matter and, after a night long discussions, was unable to reach a settlement. Both the jamaat membership and its Executive were divided on the issue. The President, the Imam and their supporters then walked out of the meeting. During the month of Ramadhan of 1970, they started another mosque in Second Street, Windsor Forest, where they held the Eidul-Fitr prayers. About 75% members of the original jamaat joined this new mosque. Today, due to juridic differences, the New Mosque jamaat has a membership of about fifteen homes. Most Muslims returned to the older masjid. The present Imam of the New Mosque is Sheikh Abdul-Rahman Khan, the GII Principal.

The dispute of the Meten Meer Zorg East Jamaat was more serious as it involved police intervention and appearances in courts. The Jamaat President was a known PNC politician, PNC being then in power. The Jamaat had two members who were actively involved with GIT, one in training and the other had graduated from the GIT One-Year Course. Some Jamaat members also wanted genuine Islamic

changes, but they were resisted by the President, the Imam and others. Tension built up gradually over some simple issues as du'a after salat ; praying without hat ; saying Ameen loudly after reading Surah Fatihah in prayer; allowing women to attend Friday prayers; and applying the rules of Tajweed. The constant bickering resulted in the construction of the Zeeburg Mosque. GIT is now being built in this area, south of the Mosque. The matter, by mutual consent, was withdrawn from the courts. Today, the members of Meten Mee Zorg East Jamaat and the Zeeburg Jamaat enjoy an excellent relationship and are invited to each other's functions.

Uthman Yahya, an African Muslim, speaks of the construction of a Mosque in the North-West District bordering Venezuela. He reports that many Muslims live there and he feels that more efforts should be spent in calling the Amerindians to Islam. As Muslims settle in new areas other mosques will be built.

11 - The Role of Guyana Muslims in Politics and Society

Muslims hold prominent position in the Government. For example, the former Prime Minister, Hamilton Bilal Green, is a Muslim. He is now Mayor of Georgetown. Presently, Dr. Asgar Ally is Minister of Finance and Feroze Mohamed is Minister of Home Affairs. Also Mohamed Shahabudeen, the former Attorney General, is a member of the World Court at the Hague.

Hosein Ganie showed much courage in opposing both PPP and PNC, the major political parties. He reasoned that the Muslim percentage vote is sufficient to give them enough Parliamentary seats to enable them to hold the balance of power, since elections were contested under proportional representation. He began his anti-Communist campaign as he associated with Abdool-Majeed (then USIA President), R.B. Gajraj, C.A. Mc Doom and Muhammed

Ahmed-Nani. In 1963, he traveled to England to present a memorandum in support of Proportional Representation for Guyana.

In 1964, he formed the Guyanese United Muslim Party (GUMP) to contest the National elections against PPP which was deemed Communist. GUMP secured only 1100 votes and Ganie lost his deposit. GUMP was made up by sincere Muslims. But while most influential Muslims kept cordial relationships with GUMP's leaders, few took it seriously. The voting pattern was according to race, and Muslims felt frightened to strike it on their own.

In 1969, Ganie changed the name of GUMP to Al-Mujahideen. The latter did not fare better than GUMP and got no seat in Parliament. But in the absence then of any-assertive representative Islamic body, Al-Mujahideen represented Muslim interests at every forum and gave evidence when the constitution of Guyana was being drafted.

Guyana Muslims were not prepared for an Islamic party. At present also, Muslims are not sure they want to have their own political party. The existence of Al-Mujahideen angered the PPP supporters who branded all Muslims anti-PPP and anti-Indian, which was a ridiculous allegation, as Al-Mujahideen did not receive much Muslim support. Many Muslims believe that a Muslim party would draw too much attention and put too much pressure on the Muslim Community from all other political and ethnic groups. They feel that it is better for the interest of the Guyanese Muslim Community that Muslim individuals join all political parties and work within these parties for the interest of both Guyana and its Muslim Community.

While there was discrimination against Muslims during the colonial period, all races and religious group enjoy freedom after independence. No laws are instituted against Muslims or any other religious group. In Guyana, Muslims are found in managing multi-million dollar business. They are among qualified professionals,

politicians, clerks, laborers, artisans, civil servants, Government ministers and parliamentarians.

The different race groups co-existed peacefully. But with the PPP split in 1955, tensions developed between East Indians and Africans and Guyana experienced racial violence in the 1962 - 1964 period. As a result, the racial composition of many villages and towns changed. East Indians were forced to flee for their lives from Linden, a mining town 100 km from Georgetown up the Demerara River. Many were killed or raped, their businesses looted and their properties burnt. The effects of these events are still seen in the strategies used by present-day politicians.

As a result of economic mismanagement and corruption, moral values and ethics degenerated, while educational standards fell. Guyana has now the worst results in the CXC and ECE exams. The entire society is suffering from a social malaise. This is the direct result of major economic, social and political policies instituted since 1964. Guyana is considered one of the poorest countries in the World. In the American Continent, only Haiti is worst than Guyana.

Since 1803, when the British took over, until independence, Guyana experienced with at least five constitutions. In 1953, the Constitution was suspended on the pretext that PPP was a Marxist party and Cheddi Jagan, its President, was a Communist. In the Constitution established by the PNC Government (1964 - 1992), Guyana enjoyed a Republican form of government. From an anti-Socialist position on its formation in 1958, PNC declared itself a Socialist party when in power.

With the breakdown of the Soviet Empire, PPP assumed a new image which it presented to the electorate in 1992. It contested the general elections as the PPP/Civic and gained the majority of the votes cast, thus forming the Government. Cheddi Jagan is now the President of Guyana, after 28 years its Opposition Leader since he was removed

from office as Premier in 1964. The present Opposition Leader is Hugh Desmond Hoyte of PNC, the former President of the country.

In spite of the major constitutional changes, Guyana laws remained based upon the Roman-British model. When the present Guyanese Constitution was being drafted, two Muslims (Hosein Ganie and A.K. Juman Yassin) appeared before the Constitutional Commission, but their recommendations were not accepted. Muslim input was therefore nill.

Muslims are not isolated from the social, political and economical upheavals in Guyana. They are very much part of them. Economically, Muslims are collectively strong. The danger they always faced came from their involvement in political bickering. They entered politics later than any other ethnic group, but politics divided them for two decades and almost destroyed them from within. This taught the Guyanese Muslim Community a lesson that they are not to forget it quickly. However, They are still to organize themselves as to have a political impact in the interest of the society at large and of their community.

12 - Opportunities and Challenges

In the field of education the Muslims of Guyana spent an enormous effort. In 1962, one Muslim secondary school was established in Brichdam, Georgetown called the "Muslim educational trust college". There was no Islamic studies in its curriculum. However, it used to perform well at the GCE O'levels. When the Guyanas government nationalized all schools in 1976, this school was nationalized too.

Serious Islamic education started with the arrival of Ahmed Ihwass. Today, most mosques have facilities for Islamic education. Both the GIT and CIOG have planned curriculum for Muslim children. The GIT designed a curriculum for the youth and elders as well through gooded study-circles and general classes.

CIOG is running Imam training courses. GIT runs vacational courses at the basic, intermediate and Advanced levels. It also planned special training courses for leaders, such as, the Orientation course and Management courses. GIT also is planing and executing Teachers training courses and Media seminars. GIT has over one hundred graded study-circles in various parts of Guyana.

Presently, there is also the lady Khadijah nursery school which is a pilot project the GIT, and the Guyabna Islamic Institute, an Islamic institution gider learning. It has attracted students not only from Guyana, but also from versions parts the Caribbean, the U.K. and Ghana.

The subjects taught at the Institute are Arabic language, Ulosmul-Quran, ulsomul-Hadeeth, Quranic recitation, seerah, Islamic history, research Methodology, Msulul-zigh and tigh, Islamic ideology, etc ... The duration of the program at the institute is two years, and the requirements to attend are a sound secondary education and good Islamic behavior.

In the social field, USIA manages two orphanages in Georgetown, one for boys and one for girls. They are well managed. There is also an old people's home and orphanage in New Amsterdam, Berbice, and an old people's home in Canefield Cangie. Also, there is in Georgetown a facility for elderly people. However, they have to pay for the services given, and is therefore used mainly by the wealthy.

CIOG is collecting and distributing Zakaah at the national level. There is also the Needy fund which collects and distributes Zakaah in Demerara. CIOG has a burial service in Georgetown it charge a minimum cost for burial. In cases where the family cannot afford the charge they are given free services.

GIT is distributing food and clothing at various times the year. In 1994, the Human Concern International (HCI) from Canada had established a branch in Guyana. This will help Guyanese, both

Muslims and non-Muslims, in initiative proper projects for their economical and social development.

Muslim women are increasingly getting involved in developing their respective community. They are becoming more and more educated. Today, the Muslim women in Guyana are involved in various activities among women and children. They are co-directing classes for children, for adolescents and women, running cultural program, executing seminars on home management, pre-Natal and fast-Natal education, first Aid raising up children and AIDS. Both GIT and CIOG have a sisters arm in their operation. They are called NISA and NACOSA respectively.

Economically, Indian Muslims are in general better off than African Muslims. However, there is little economic cooperation between the two communities. GIT and CIOG are studying a framework to resolve this imbalance.

In 1936, "Nur-E-Islam", the first Islamic journal was published by the Islamic Association. In 1937, it was followed by "Islam" published by the Sadr-E-Anjuman. Unfortunately, with the exception of few copies in the period between 1936 and the 1950's, most of the issues are lost. The search is still on for lost copies of these two journals, since they contain detailed information on important events in the Guyanese Muslim Community in the period between 1930 and 1960. Another source is the information supplied by elderly Muslims who have been actively involved in public life as politicians, parliamentarians, leaders of organizations, civil servants, immigration officers, or Imams.

Since the 1970's, a number of other Islamic publications appeared in Guyana. GIT produces its bi-monthly news bulletin called As-Silah. CIOG publishes a quarterly newsletter entitled Al-Bayan. They also published a translation of As-Sayuti's "Excellence of Celebrating the Prophet's Birthday". In 1985, GIT published a booklet on "Tajweed-ul-Qur'an" by Sheikh Raouf Xaman; in 1986, three booklets entitled

"A Tribute To Our Hero And Martyr", dedicated to Ahmed Ihwaas, by Hasseb Khan and Wazir Abdullah; and in 1988, a book entitled "Qur'anic Arabic Reader". Plans are afoot to publish more Islamic literature in the near future.

There is no comprehensive book on the history of Muslims in Guyana. In 1988, interest in this matter was raised when the Government observed the 150th Anniversary of the freedom of slaves and the arrival of East Indians in Guyana. M.B. Khan presented in 1945 a booklet entitled "A Retrospective Based On The Sadr-E-Anjuman of British Guyana (1937 - 1944)". It dealt with organizational rivalry between the Sadr-E-Anjuman and the Islamic Association. Ameer Khan wrote in 1963 a booklet entitled "Islam in British Guyana". It dealt specifically with British Guiana's Muslim Youth Organization.

There are two early works on East Indians in British Guiana. One was written in 1950 by Devarlea Nauth, and the other by Peter Ruhoman to mark the Indian Centenary 100 years in Guyana. Over the years several other books were published on the subject. Information on the history of Muslims in Guyana has to be secured from these texts and others dealing with different aspects of Guyana. With regards to slavery there is no shortage of books, but again the source runs dry on the question of Muslims.

Muslims do not only have to contend with National problems emanating from internal conflicts with non-Muslims on a particular issue, such as artificial insemination, they also have to deal with distorted information disseminated by Western media on events and issues in the Muslim World.

Activities that cater for various needs of the Guyanese Muslim Community are undoubtedly a reflection of its social awareness and its ability to generate collective efforts for the uplift and betterment of its condition. However, this worthwhile goal was belied by the lack of inter-organizational unity and trust that plagued the Community. The

foremost task facing the Muslim leadership in Guyana is to make sincere and determined efforts to develop ways for mutual understanding and cooperation.

Islamic activities for the youth are fairly well organized in Guyana as was reflected above. They could gain much by cooperating with Muslim groups in the Caribbean and the World at large. IIFSO, WAMY and the Da'wah Academy of the International Islamic Academy of Islamabad (Pakistan) have executed leadership training programs facilitate this process.

Concerning pseudo-Muslim groups, there are both Rabwis (Qadyanis) and Lahoris (Ahmadis) in Guyana. With the introduction of Islamic education in Guyana in the late 1970's, their influence has waned. Today, they have two jamaats in Georgetown, and not many people are following them anymore. The Ansarallah, a group influenced by a movement of the same name in the USA, attracted a few Africans. It is of negligible consequence in Guyana.

However, Guyanese Muslims are suffering greatly from the large rate of emigration towards Canada and the USA, especially as it affects the most educated and talented elements in their Community. But during the recent years, some emigrants to Surinam and Venezuela started to return. Those in North America are helping Islamic institutions in Guyana. They have not lost their interest in this country.

In conclusion, the prospects of Islam and the Muslim Community in Guyana is great. The leadership is challenged to develop the necessary mechanism and approach to enhance its process of growth.

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CHAPTER VIII

Islam in Surinam

by

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- 1 - Introduction
- 2 - Formation of the Muslim Community
- 3 - Geographical Distribution of Muslims in Surinam
- 4 - The Indian Muslim Associations
- 5 - The Javanese Muslim Associations
- 6 - Common Organizations
- 7 - The Mosques in Surinam
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- 10 - Muslim Social Activities
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- 12 - Conclusions References.

1 - Introduction

Surinam, formerly Dutch Guyana, the central part of the Guianas, is situated on the North-East coast of South America. Surinam borders on Guyana, the former British Guiana, in the West, French Guiana, in the East, Brazil, in the South, and the Atlantic Ocean in the North. It covers an area of 163,265 km². Its capital is Paramaribo.

Surinam is made up by coastal plains, crossed by rivers, followed by hills and then mountains reaching an altitude of more than one thousand meters. The climate is tropical. Surinam, covered by rain forest, is a poor country the economy of which is based on agriculture. Most of the economic activity occurs in the coastal plain where most of the population lives. Surinam produces rice, sugarcane, coffee, cotton, wood, bauxite and much fish. The industry is limited to the production of aluminum, sugar and consumer goods.

In 1492, the Spanish explored the Surinam coast. In 1494, the first Spanish conquerors, Pinon and Ojeda, landed on that coast, finding an Amerindian population living in large villages along such rivers as the Surinam, the Moroni, the Nickerie and the Cottica. Fantastic stories about the discovery of the Eldorado, the land of gold, lured all kinds of European adventurers and pirates.

In 1593, Spain declared Surinam its possession. In 1594, Domingo de Vera occupied the land he named Guiana, in the name of the King of Spain. This claim was challenged by the French, the Dutch and the English. In 1580, occurred the first Dutch expedition to Surinam. During the first part of the 17th Century the Amerindian population defended themselves with courage against European colonization.

In 1630, the English tried to conquer Surinam. In 1667, they were expelled by the Dutch, led by Abraham Crijnssen. After lengthy negotiations, the English agreed to exchange with the Dutch New Amsterdam, later named New York City, for Surinam. The Dutch remained the masters of Surinam ever since, except for brief periods in 1799, 1802 and 1804 - 1816 when it was under the English.

In 1954, Netherlands gave local autonomy to Surinam, within a Dutch Commonwealth, including the Dutch Antilles as well. On 25/11/1975, Surinam became independent. In 1982, a National Military Council, headed by Desi Bouterse, took over the Government. However, elections were held in November 1987, and the country returned back to democracy. Surinam is divided into nine administrative districts.

Surinam's population was 420,000 in 1991 and 226,000 in 1951. Since independence, it remained stationary due to large emigration to the Netherlands. Paramaribo, the largest city and capital, is the home of more than the fourth of Surinam's population.

The Amerindian population of Surinam suffered genocide at the hands of the European colonizers to the point that their numbers have been reduced greatly. Those who survived retreated to the jungles. In

1651, some Englishmen settled in Surinam, followed by Jews expelled from Brazil. But these could not supply the manpower needed for the plantations.

From the beginning, the Dutch started to solve the problem of manpower by bringing in Africans and enslaving them. In nightly raids on the coastal villages of West Africa, Dutch seamen captured thousands of Africans, chained them, and transported them in horrible holds of ships to Surinam. More than a third died before ever reaching Surinam. The total number of those who survived, between 1608 and 1863, is between 300,000 and 350,000 persons.

Under the leadership of two Muslims, Arabi and Zam-Zam, many Africans rebelled against the Dutch in the bush and organized themselves into tribes. They were able to defeat the Dutch who signed peace treaties with them in Djuka in 1761 and Saramaka in 1762. Their descendants are known today as "Bush Negros". They still preserve some Islamic practices such as ablutions (wudu).

When Slavery was abolished in Surinam on 1/7/1863, the Dutch started to look for labor from other countries as the freed slaves refused to stay on the plantations. They brought in 500 Portuguese from Madeira, 2,500 Chinese from Java and 2,400 East Indians, mostly from Barbados. However, this immigration was not successful.

On 8/9/1870, the Netherlands agreed with England to bring in to Surinam from India indentured laborers. Although this agreement functioned satisfactory, the Dutch looked for other solutions as resistance to indentured labor increased in India, and the laborers remained British subjects in Surinam. Immigration from India started in 1873 and lasted until 1916. By 1890, the Dutch started to bring in indentured laborers from Java, then a Dutch colony. This immigration lasted until 1939.

This history explains the diversified nature of Surinam's population, as shown in Table 1.1. The population numbered in 1980, 355,000 people, including 157,000 ethnic Africans (44%), 119,000

ethnic Indians (33.5%), 58,000 ethnic Javanese (16.3%), 11,000 Amerindians (3.1%), and the remaining 10,000 of other origins, including Chinese, Europeans, Lebanese, Palestinians and others. These percentages have fluctuated greatly since 1950 because of large scale emigration. In 1991, the population amounted to 420,000 people as shown in the estimates of Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : Ethnic Groups in Surinam and the Evolution of their Numbers since 1950

Ethnic G.	African	Indian	Java'se	Am'indian	Others	Total
1950	Nber	71,263	62,150	35,192	1,635	6,849
	Percentage	40.2%	35.1%	19.9%	0.9%	3.9%
						100%
1964	Nber	142,659	112,633	48,463	7,287	13,169
	Percentage	44.0%	34.7%	14.9%	2.2%	4.2%
						100%
1972	Nber	154,847	142,917	57,688	8,050	16,105
	Percentage	40.8%	37.6%	15.2%	2.1%	4.3%
						100%
1980	Nber	157,096	118,983	58,004	11,021	10,036
	Percentage	44.2%	33.5%	16.1%	3.1%	2.9%
						100%
1991	Nber(esti.)	165,000	135,000	100,000	3,000	7,000
	Percentage	39.3%	32.1%	23.8%	3.1%	1.7%
						100%

The latest census was taken in 1980. The movement of population since then is shown in Table 1.2. In 1991, Surinam's population was estimated to number about 404,000 persons. Assuming about 16,000 persons (7,000 Muslims among them) who have not been accounted for, being illegals, mostly from Guyana, the total population of Surinam would have been around 420,000 in 1991.

Ethnic Africans include the descendants of the enslaved Africans, called Creole, living in towns and constituting about 75% of the Africans, and the so-called Bush Negros, living in the forest and constituting the remaining 25% of the Africans. The latter reconstituted their tribal organization and saved much of their cultural heritage.

The official language of Surinam is Dutch, but the lingua franca is Surinamese, also called Sranan Tongo or Taki Taki. Indians speak

Hindi and Urdu. Indonesians speak Javanese. The Bush Negros speak their own languages and so do the Amerindians.

Table 1.2 : Movement of population of Surinam Since 1981

Year	Net natu. incr	Net immigration	Net increase	Population end of year
1981	7,653	-1,574	6,079	358,069
1982	8,699	174	8,873	367,422
1983	9,012	-2,420	6,592	374,014
1984	8,630	95	8,535	382,549
1985	9,030	-3,419	5,611	388,160
1986	7,385	-3,182	4,203	392,363
1987	7,193	-4,887	2,306	394,669
1988	6,640	-2,392	4,248	398,917
1989	7,500	-3,267	4,233	403,150
1990	6,753	-6,234	519	403,669
1991	6,531	-5,991	540	404,209
1992	7,104	-5,423	1,681	405,890
1993	6,452	-7,597	-1,145	404,050

Religiously, about 32% of the population is Christian, 23% Hindu, 35% Muslim and the remaining 10% belong to other religious affiliations as shown in Table 1.3. Thus, Muslims are the most numerous group of Surinam, and represent the highest Muslim percentage anywhere in the American-continent.

Table 1.3 : Religions in Surinam in 1991 (estimates)

Religion	Numbers	Percentage
Islam	147,000	35.0%
Christianity	135,000	32.2%
Hinduism	95,000	22.6%
Others	43,000	10.2%
Total	420,000	100.0%

2 - Formation of the Muslim Community

The first Muslims in Surinam were enslaved Africans. In 1883, the "Nachrichten aus der Brudergemeine" (Journal of the Evangelical Mission) mentioned the presence of a large number of Muslims among them, mainly from the Sokko tribe of West Africa. When they arrived to Surinam, after a most harrowing experience at sea, they were auctioned off as slaves, and whisked away to the sugarcane plantations, where they remained for the rest of their lives. Their African and Muslim names were replaced by Christian ones, and they were forbidden from practicing their religion and culture. Thus, Islam was blotted out completely from their lives, and Christianity was imposed upon them and their descendants. Many are now returning to Islam.

The second wave of Muslim arrivals came from India. The first ship, the "Lala Rookh", carrying indentured laborers from India, arrived in the harbor of Paramaribo on 5/6/1873 with 410 immigrants. The last, the SS "Dewa", was on 24/5/1916. The total number of Indian indentured laborers who entered Surinam was 34,304, of which 11,512 returned to India at the expiration of their contracts, and 22,792 remained. Of the immigrants, 17.5% were Muslim, or about 6,000 persons, mostly of the Hanafi School. Of these, about 1,500 returned, and 4,500 remained, forming 20% of the remaining Indian population. Most Indian immigrants came from Calcutta, Madras and Karachi. Many Muslims originated from Uttar Pradesh, a state having a high Muslim percentage in its population.

Indians gave an impetus to the colonial economy of Surinam. They were diligent with a zest for work that saved the plantations from ruin. Islam survived among them in spite of tremendous social pressures. However, Muslims had to deal with Hindus, in majority among the immigrants, and the Christians, the masters. Although these early Muslims came from the poorer and lesser educated districts of Uttar

Pradesh, they managed to keep their religion alive. They were not very knowledgeable in Islam, but they held fast to whatever they knew.

At the end of their five year contract, the laborers could choose one of three possibilities:

- 1) extension of the contract period for another five years ;
- 2) return to India free of charge ; and
- 3) settling on a small piece of land in Surinam. Most Muslim immigrants chose the last option and began to establish small communities. A few had some knowledge of Islam and passed it to their fellow immigrants by building small madrassahs. The social evolution upwards of the children and grand-children of these poor Indian laborers was indeed amazing.

The third wave of Muslim immigration came mostly from Java, but also from Sumatra and other islands. Almost all were Muslims of the Shafei School. They were indentured laborers whose arrival was greeted with enthusiasm by most Surinam's planters. As these new laborers came from a Dutch colony, the planters stopped being dependent on the good-will of British governments. Indeed, since 1875, the latter often stopped the emigration of laborers from British India. The Javanese were also willing and adequate workers.

The first Javanese laborers arrived in Surinam on the SS Prins Alexander on 9/8/1890. This group consisted of 44 persons, 15 married couples, 11 single men, one single woman and 2 children. They were brought specifically as contact-laborers for the plantation "Marienburg", property of the Nederlandse Handel Maatschappij (Netherlands Trading Company).

Initially, Javanese immigration was slow, but by the turn of the century, the arrival of these new laborers became regular. By 1920, a total of roughly 15,000 Javanese entered Surinam, including 10,000 men. The shortage of women became a source of chronic tension and conflict on the plantations.

Another cause of conflict was the meager wage paid to the Javanese contractees. For many planters, who could barely keep their plantations operating, wages were often the tag-end of the budget. The contractees were the victims. Often conflicts arose between the Government and planters about wages, the lodgings of the immigrants and their medical care.

Throughout the whole immigration period, 1890 - 1939, 32,956 Javanese entered Surinam. Of these, 7,784 returned to Java. The last group to repatriate were about 1,000 people who returned to Indonesia in 1954 on the MS "Langkofas". Thus, about 24,000 Javanese remained in Surinam. After their contact period was over, the indentured laborers were encouraged by the Government to stay in Surinam by offering them a plot of land and a sum of 100 guilders.

Up to 1930, virtually all the Javanese in Surinam were working on the plantations as indentured laborers. Afterwards, as many plantations shut down as a result of the world crisis, they left, and started a new life in scale agriculture on the lands given to them by the Government.

Thus, a diversified Muslim Community was formed in Surinam, in majority Sunni, with the Indians mainly Hanafi and the Javanese mainly Shafei. The 1971 census gives the number of Muslims in each ethnic group as reported in Table 2.1.

The 1972 census has under-estimated the number of Muslims in Surinam, as many probably did not mention their religious affiliation. Indeed, most Javanese are Muslims, whereas only 85% have declared so in the census, whereas the percentage of Muslims among Indians is certainly around 25% if the figures of those who remained among the immigrants are taken into account. Thus, Surinam Muslims were in 1972 around 95,000, or about 25% of the total population of the country.

Table 2.1 : Muslims in the 1972 Census

Ethnic Group	Nber of Muslims	Percentage in the group	Percentage in Muslims.
Javanese	49,045	85.0%	66.1%
Indians	24,070	16.8%	32.5%
Africans	598	0.4%	0.8%
Amerindians	29	0.4%	-
Others	428	2.7%	0.6%
Total	74,170	19.5%	100 %

The 1980 census is even less reliable as far as religious affiliation is concerned. The evolution of the numbers of members of different religious denominations in Surinam, and their percentages, are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 : Religious Denominations in Surinam From Official Censuses

Religion	1964		1972		1980	
	Number	Percentage	Nber	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Christian	142,750	44	161,137	42.5	149,138	42.0
Hindu	87,440	27	113,900	30.0	97,170	27.4
Muslim	64,842	20	74,170	19.5	69,638	19.6
Others	29,179	9	30,400	8.0	38,914	11.0
Total	324,211	100	379,607	100.0	354,860	100.0

In the period 1971 - 1980, about 87,383 Surinamese left for the Netherlands. With those born in that country, there were in 1980, 130,000 Surinamese in the Netherlands, including 18,000 Muslims, or less than 14% of the total emigrants. Thus, Muslims emigrate less than the others as their percentage among migrants is 56% that of the population at home. Furthermore, in the 1980's, about 7,000 Guyanese Muslims have settled in Surinam, due to economic reasons.

In 1991, the population of Surinam was about 420,000, and about 250,000 Surinamese lived in the Netherlands. If one assumes the same percentage of Muslims in the Surinamese population of Surinam and

the Netherlands, there will be about 170,000 Surinamese Muslims in both countries. As only about 30,000 Surinamese Muslims were in the Netherlands, the number of those in Surinam would be around 140,000. To these should be added the converts and new immigrants, mainly from Palestine, Lebanon and Guyana. Thus, Table 2.3 gives the estimated number of Muslims in 1991 in Surinam by ethnic group.

Table 2.3 : Estimated Number of Muslims in Surinam by Ethnic Group in 1991

Ethnic Group	Number of Muslims	Percentage in Muslims	Percentage in group
Javanese	100,000	68.0%	100.0%
Indians	40,000	27.2%	29.6%
Africans	4,000	2.7%	2.5%
Others	3,000	2.1%	12.0%
Total	147,000	100.0%	35.0%

3 - Geographical Distribution of Muslims in Surinam

Surinam is divided administratively in nine districts which vary greatly in area and population. The different ethnic groups are not distributed evenly in the country. Indeed, their percentages vary in space and time. Table 3.1 gives ethnic distributions per district in the censuses of 1950, 1964, 1972 and 1980. The distribution of Muslims per district is as shown Table 3.2. Table 3.3 reports the Muslim population by ethnic group and district as reported in the 1972 census.

Table 3.1 : Ethnic Distribution in Surinam in Time and Space

1950

District	Africans Nber	Africans %	Indians Nber	Indians %	Javanese Nber	Javanese %	Am-indians Nber	Am-indians %	Others Nber	Others %	Total
Suriname	9,965	18.4%	29,477	54.6	12,605	23.4	887	1.6	1,076	2.0	54,010
Paramaribo	49,870	69.4	12,857	18.0	3,645	5.1	422	0.6	4,702	6.5	71,496
Nickerie	3,348	20.7	9,269	57.3	3,210	19.9	71	0.4	268	1.7	16,166
Marowijne	2,214	55.7	154	3.9	1,188	29.9	95	2.4	323	8.1	3,974
Brokopondo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Para	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commewijne	1,793	9.5	5,765	30.5	10,953	58.0	116	0.6	268	1.4	18,895
Saramacca	726	8.3	4,581	52.1	3,263	37.1	42	0.5	183	2.0	8,795
Coronie	3,347	89.2	47	1.2	328	8.7	2	0.1	29	0.8	3,753
Total	71,263	40.2	62,150	35.1	35,192	19.9	1,635	0.9	6,849	3.9	177,089

1964

District	Africans		Indians		Javanese		Am-indians		Others		Total
	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	
Suriname	32,654	29.2	55,208	49.4	18,292	16.4	1,774	1.6	3,766	3.4	111,694
Paramaribo	68,212	61.5	25,437	22.9	7,963	7.2	1,448	1.3	7,807	7.1	110,867
Nickerie	6,030	19.8	17,973	59.0	4,887	16.0	904	3.0	678	2.2	30,472
Marowijne	17,736	76.4	567	2.4	2,336	10.1	2,157	9.3	417	1.8	11,531
Brokopondo	11,213	97.3	95	0.8	122	1.1	28	0.2	73	1.8	11,531
Para	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commewijne	2,204	10.7	6,717	32.4	11,233	54.3	277	1.3	269	1.3	20,700
Saramacca	1,266	10.6	6,589	55.1	3,294	27.6	696	5.8	107	0.9	11,952
Coronie	3,344	88.4	47	1.2	336	8.9	3	0.1	52	1.4	3,782
Total	142,659	44.0	112,633	34.8	48,463	14.9	7,287	2.2	13,169	4.1	324,211

1972

District	Africans		Indians		Javanese		Am-indian		Others		Total
	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	
Suriname	46,856	30.8	78,250	51.5	19,766	13.0	1,571	1.0	5,692	3.7	152,135
Paramaribo	56,383	54.4	27,841	26.8	10,063	9.7	1,626	1.6	7,825	7.5	103,738
Nickerie	5,488	15.8	22,088	63.4	5,721	16.4	744	2.1	812	2.3	34,85
Marowijne	19,243	75.6	676	2.7	2,976	11.7	2,094	8.2	477	1.8	25,466
Brokopondo	15,367	98.7	40	0.3	72	0.5	15	0.1	58	0.4	15,552
Para	6,498	39.4	1,858	11.3	6,010	36.5	1,299	7.9	813	4.9	16,478
Commewijne	1,428	8.5	4,983	29.7	9,894	58.9	240	1.4	246	1.5	16,791
Saramacca	874	7.6	7,141	62.2	2,868	25.0	459	4.0	138	1.2	11,480
Coronie	2,710	87.0	40	1.3	318	10.2	3	0.1	44	1.4	3,114
Total	154,847	40.8	142,917	37.7	57,688	15.2	8,050	2.1	16,110	4.2	379,607

1980

District	Africans		Indians		Javanese		Am-Indian		Others		Total
	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	
Suriname	63,656	38.2	71,820	43.1	24,510	14.7	2,351	1.4	4,318	2.6	166,655
Paramaribo	39,809	58.5	14,489	21.3	8,538	12.6	1,148	1.7	4,021	5.9	68,005
Nickerie	5,466	15.9	20,604	59.7	5,971	17.3	1,969	5.7	487	1.4	34,497
Marowijne	17,231	73.5	431	1.9	2,768	11.8	2,633	11.2	380	1.6	23,443
Brokopond	19,617	96.8	246	1.2	100	0.5	204	1.0	101	0.5	20,268
Para	6,59	43.8	1,487	10.0	5,499	36.9	1,009	6.8	366	2.5	14,890
Commewijne	1,580	11.0	4,625	32.2	7,854	54.7	151	1.1	145	1.0	14,355
Saramacca	907	8.8	5,230	50.5	2,470	23.9	1,556	15.0	185	1.8	10,348
Coronie	2,401	86.4	51	1.8	294	10.6	0	-	33	1.2	2,779
Total	157,196	44.4	118,983	33.4	58,004	16.3	11,021	3.1	10,036	2.8	355,240

Table 3.2 : Muslim District Distribution in Surinam in Official Censuses.

District	1972		1980	
	Nber	%	Nber	%
Suriname	29,663	19.5	31,873	19.1
Paramaribo	14,320	13.8	10,226	15.0
Nickerie	8,725	25.0	8,746	25.4
Marowijne	2,783	10.9	2,612	11.1
Brokopondo	71	0.5	120	0.6
Para	5,432	33.0	5,210	35.0
Commewijne	9,920	59.1	7,922	55.2
Saramacca	3,003	26.2	2,622	25.3
Coronie	318	10.2	269	9.7
Total	74,235	19.6	69,640	19.6

Four of the nine districts have an African absolute majority : Paramaribo, Marowijne, Brokopondo, and Coronie. In the first two, this majority decreases with time, whereas in the last two it remains overwhelming. Indians were in absolute majority in three districts : Surinam, Nickerie and Saramacca. However, in the 1980 census, they lost their majority in Surinam, the most populous district in the country, where no ethnic group is in absolute majority today, just as in the Para District. The Javanese are in majority only in the Commewijne District. The highest Amerindian percentage was in Marowijne which was overpassed in the 1980 census by Saramacca (15%). For other ethnic groups, the highest percentage was in Paramaribo in 1980 (7.5%).

Table 3.2 shows that Muslims are in majority only in Commewijne District, where the Javanese are in majority. In 1972, Muslim percentage were 10% and above in all districts, except Brokopondo where their percentage remained below 1%. In 1980, they became less than 10% in the Coronie District as well. However, as mentioned before, real values are probably higher by more than 50% than the values mentioned above. Muslims may be in absolute majority in both the Para and the Commewijne districts.

About 43,983 Muslims lived in the districts of Surinam and Paramaribo, as per the 1972 census. This represented 59.2% of the total Muslim population of Surinam. In the 1980 census, the Muslim population of these two districts became 42,099, or 60.5% of the total.

Table 3.3 : Muslim District Distribution in Surinam in the 1972 Census, per Ethnic Group

District	Javanese		Indians		Others		Total	
	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%	Nber	%
Surinam	17,081	57.6	12,264	41.3	318	1.1	29,663	100
Paramaribo	7,386	51.6	6,524	45.5	410	2.9	14,320	100
Nickerie	5,284	60.6	3,311	37.9	130	1.5	8,725	100
Marowijne	2,592	93.1	156	5.6	35	1.3	2,783	100
Brokopondo	54	76.1	0	0.0	17	23.9	71	100
Para	4,828	88.9	564	10.4	40	0.7	5,432	100
Commewijne	8,965	90.4	916	9.2	39	0.4	9,920	100
Saramacca	2,660	88.6	335	11.2	8	0.2	3,003	100
Coronie	315	99.1	1	0.3	2	0.6	318	100
Total	49,165	66.2	24,071	32.4	999	1.4	74,235	100

Table 3.3 shows that the Javanese are the majority among Muslims in all districts of Surinam. The highest percentage reached by Indian Muslims is 45.5% of the total Muslim population of Paramaribo. The highest percentage of Muslims other than Javanese and Indian is in Brokopondo District with 23.9% of the Muslim population of the district. Javanese Muslims total 26,046 persons (53.0% of the total Javanese Muslim population of Surinam as declared in the census of 1972) in the two districts of Surinam and Commewijne. Indian Muslims total 18,78 (78.1% of the total Indian Muslim population of Surinam as declared in the 1972 census) in the two districts of Surinam and Paramaribo. Similarly, 728 Muslims other than Javanese and Indian are in the two districts of Surinam and Paramaribo, or 72.3% of their total. Most of these are revert of African origin. Their numbers have increased greatly since then.

4 - The Indian Muslim Associations

Since they came to Surinam, Indian Muslims became most aware of the importance of their organization as Muslims. They established many Islamic organizations which eventually built many Islamic institutions. The main associations are:

1- Surinaamse Islamistische Vereniging (Surinam Islamic Association, SIV)

The first Islamic organization in Surinam is the "Surinam Islamic Association" (SIV), established on 17/11/1929. On that day hundreds Muslims of all parts of Surinam gathered in Thalia, a local theatre in Paramaribo. The chairman of the initiative-committee, Sardar Karamat Ali, gave an expose of the existing situation among Muslims. Those present discussed the lack of organizational structures, the poor Muslim representation in Government, the lack of subsidies for Imams, and other relevant issues. They agreed to establish an organization to coordinate Muslim activities. After extensive deliberations the statutes of the organization were approved and an Executive Board (EB) was elected. On 5/2/1930, the statutes were registered by the Government of Surinam.

EB was given the assignment to search for a suitable place to build a Mosque. In 1931, they bought a piece of land in the center of Paramaribo. In August 1932, the first Masjid in Surinam was opened. Then, EB established branches in different Surinam districts to coordinate the activities of the jamaat.

Gradually, the necessity of education and da'wah was felt. EB made contacts with various Islamic organizations in India, such as the Sunni "Himayatul Islam". As no response was obtained, they contacted the "Ahmadiyya Anjuman" of Lahore, ignoring that, through their beliefs, they are not considered Muslims any more. In 1934, a Trinidadian Ahmadi missionary, trained at the Ahmadiyya headquarters was sent to Surinam.

SIV was active in socio-political issues. In 1946, a well-documented memorandum was presented to the Government of Surinam. It emphasized social and political issues, such as general franchise, equal treatment of all religious communities, equal appointment opportunities in the Governmental, and social and welfare facilities. SIV was also the originator of the first political party in Surinam, the Muslim Party.

The Qadiani connection of SIV was never accepted by the Muslims. But, in spite of their objections, SIV did not identify as a Qadiani organization, but neither was it a fully Sunni one.

In 1974, a General Meeting of the Muslim World League (Meccah, Saudi Arabia) attended by leading Muslim scholars from all around the world, after studying the beliefs of the Qadianis (Ahmadis), confirmed that they are not Muslims. The main objection to them arises from the fact that they do not believe in the finality of the Divine Message with the Prophet Mohammed (saw) as their founder declared himself a prophet. This decision had a great impact on Surinam Muslims.

In 1978, the SIV Ahmadi group won the election with a narrow margin of 51%. Thus, 49% of the SIV members resigned, and SIV became a fully Ahmadi organization.

Before this break those who headed SIV were Asgaralien, Jamaladdin (father), Mohamed Rajah, Dr. Isaac Jamaaluddin (son) (one of the authors of this article). These were not Ahmadis. After 1979, Ahmadis took over with their first Ahmadi president Habib Niamat.

2- Surinaamse Moesliem Associatie (The Surinam Muslim Association, SMA)

SIV contacts with the "Ahmadya Anjuman Isha'at Islam" of Lahore caused disagreements among its members. Those who opposed them left SIV and established the "Khilafat Anjuman Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat Hanafi". Two other organizations with similar beliefs were also established : the "Hidayatul Islam" and the "Akaidoel Islam". The

members of these three organisations are of Indian descent, Sunni of the Hanafi school.

On advice of Maulana Abdul Aleem Siddiqui of India who visited Surinam in 1950 with Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari, the three organizations united under the name "The Surinam Muslim Association Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat, Hanafi" (SMA), many of its members being of the Qadiriyyah Sufi Order. Later the two last organizations (Hidayatul-Islam and Akaidoel-Islam) left SMA and started operating independently.

In 1957, SMA built a large Masjid in Paramaribo and established on the same complex a primary and secondary school, and an orphanage. SMA has also branches in different parts of Surinam. Among its important presidents are Islam Ramdjan who died in October 1973. In the same year, its president was Hussein Ali, a Paramaribo businessman. In 1981 and 1987, its president was Mohamed Joenes Gaffar, an engineer at SURALCO, the main Surinam aluminum enterprise.

SMA has several committees : for religious affairs, headed by the chief Imam ; for buildings, managing the mosques ; for schools ; for the cemetery ; and five mosque committees, one for each of the major SMA mosques.

Besides managing mosques and schools, SMA does social work, publishes Islamic books, and manages television and radio da'ah emissions. SMA often represents Surinamese Muslims in international meetings. It has good relations with the Muslim World League (Saudi Arabia), Dar-Ul-Ifta (Saudi Arabia), and the Muslims of Guyana, Trinidad and Pakistan.

3- Surinaamse Islamitische Organisatie (Surinam Islamic Organization, SIO)

SIO was established on 1/8/1978 by SIV members who left it when it was taken over by Ahmadis. Its first president was DR. Isaac Jamaluddin. SIO follows the Sunni teachings. It has branches in

various parts of the country. It has also a center with a library. It does much da'wah work through radio, television, brochures, articles in the local newspapers in Dutch, Urdu and Sranang Tongo.

The SIO objectives are to defend Islam, teach it to all, especially the young, and establish mosques and Islamic schools. Women are most welcome to the SIO mosques.

Because of the growing interest in Islam among Creoles, SIO established Masjid Al-Sadaqat in the outskirts of Paramaribo where Khutbas and lectures are rendered in Dutch and Sranang Tongo. This masjid attracts increasing numbers of Muslims of all ethnic groups. Its Imam is a Ghanaian sponsored by the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO). He is also active with the Bush Negroes.

SIO has excellent relations with Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Libya. It cooperates with all the Caribbean regional Islamic organizations. It also has many Creole revert members.

4 - Surinam Muslim Federation (SMF)

This is a Sunni Hanafi organization, established in the early 1950's by the unity of Hidayatul-Islam and Akaidul-Islam who seceded from SMA. SMF has several branches in different parts of Surinam. Its president in 1981 was M. Nanhekan.

5 - The Javanese Muslim Associations

The Javanese are Sunni Muslims of the Shafei School. They speak their own language : Javanese. After the end of their contract period, most of them remained in Surinam and formed their own Muslim communities. However, they have been slow to organize compared to the Indian Muslims. Eventually, they established four organizations with many branches across Surinam.

1 - Ashafia Islam (AI)

The first Javanese Islamic organization started in Surinam was formed in 1948 under the name of "Ahmadiya Islam". It was established by persons influenced by the Muhammadiya movement organized in 1912 in Yogyakarta (Java) by K.H. Ahmed Dahlan. As the name of the organization tended to get confused with the Ahmadis (a version of Qadianism) which are not considered Muslims, it was changed in 1974 to become "Ashafia Islam" (AI). This new name stresses the fact that the members of this organization are followers of the Shafei school of Sunnism.

The AI President for many years was Honorable William I. Soemita, born around 1909 the son of the late Hajj Iding Soemita. He is a political leader, a former member of Parliament and the head of a political party. In the late 1980's, he was also Vice-President of the ruling coalition and Minister of Social Affairs.

AI has about 35 branches. It represents the traditional elements for the Javanese Community belonging mostly to older generations. As Javanese came to Surinam across the Pacific, they kept praying towards the West while the Indians pray toward the East as the distance to Mecca from Surinam is much smaller going east than going west. Thus, AI members keep their Qibla to the West and built their mosques in that direction. They also keep alive many pre-Islamic traditions.

2 - Stichting der Islamitische Gemeenten in Suriname (Islamic Foundation of Surinam, SIS)

SIS was established on 2/8/1968 by less conservative members of the Javanese Community. They pray correctly towards the West. They became the largest and most active Javanese organization, with more than 70 branches across Surinam. It attracted also many Creole revert members. SIS's Credo is to adhere to the teachings of Qur'an and the Sunnah. They do not mix cultural traditions with Islam.

SIS's headquarters are located in the heart of Paramaribo alongwith an Islamic Library, meeting rooms, a hostel for 60 people and classrooms. SIS has a secretariate with a full time dynamic administrator, S. Pardi.

SIS has good relations with the Indonesian Embassy in Surinam and SIS students are given the opportunity to continue their higher Islamic education in Indonesia. SIS brought from Indonesia many Imams to work in the various districts of Surinam. Some of them are paid by Dar-ul-Ifta of Saudi Arabia. SIS has indeed excellent relations with most Muslim countries and organizations.

During the period 1987 - 1989, SIS published the journal "Hilal" in the Javanese and Dutch languages. SIS members also established the "Islamic Information Center of Surinam" which publishes the "Risalah Da'wah" in both languages. SIS manages four state-aided primary schools and a home for senior members. The Government has also donated 170 hectares of land to SIS to develop agricultural and livestock projects.

Since 1990, SIS started mass ledain-Salat, a public prayer, on Independence Square in Paramaribo. It also organizes pilgrimage to Mecca yearly and sent many students for higher Islamic studies to Indonesia, India (Bombay), Saudi Arabia (Median) and Libya (Tripoli). SIS has a Women Chapter headed by Ms Anam E. Jabar, a Javanese Surinamese lady who graduated from Indonesia in Islamic studies. She speaks fluently Javanese, Dutch and English and is an active worker for Islam.

The different leaders who headed SIS since its establishment are Hassan Amir Siragar (the first president) followed by Mr. Farasara, Dr. Sowirona, Mr. Amat Ramin (a former member of Parliament), Mr. S. Pardi, Mr. Amatali, Dr. S. Tomohamat and others.

*3- Federatie van Islamitische Gemeenten in Suriname
(Federation of Islamic Organizations of Surinam, FIGS)*

In 1978, several AI members left it because of political differences. They joined hands with two small Javanese organizations, "Fukum Islam" and "Gemeeten Sido Rukum", to establish FIGS which was first meant to gather all Muslims of Surinam. The first president was M.K. Kaiman. Outside political differences, FIGS is identical to AI. Its mosques face the West as well. Its members, also of the older generation, are accused by their detractors to keep pre-Islamic cultural traditions.

4- Perserakatan Jamaah Islamiyah Suriname (PJIS)

PJIS is a small Javanese organization which adheres to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and tries to keep alive Indonesian cultural traditions. It has about 12 branches across Surinam. Its mosques face the West, just as do SIS and Indian mosques.

6 - Common Organizations

During the colonial period, there were few contacts between Indian and Javanese Muslims mainly because of language barrier and differences in cultural traditions. In the 1970's, gradually this situation changed. Contacts resulted in the establishment of organizations for all Muslims, the most important being the "Madjiliees Moeslimien Suriname" (MMS) and the "Islamic Students Organization Suriname" (ISOS).

1- "Madjiliees Moeslimien Suriname (Council of the Muslims of Surinam, MMS).

The first common gathering of all Surinamese Muslim organizations for the purpose of unity, was held in Paramaribo on 11/6/1972 under the initiative of SIS. Five Islamic bodies took part : SIV, SMA and SMF on the Indian side, and AI and SIS on the Javanese side. They agreed to explore the possibilities of cooperation between the Muslims of Surinam, independently of their national origin, and their unity. A committee was formed to study the

following relevant issues : social affairs ; religious education and establishment of schools ; establishment of an Islamic Council ; centralization of Zakaah ; fund raising for student scholarships ; and Muslim cemeteries.

Due to differences of views on religious matters, it took two years for the Islamic Council to be established. In a meeting on 17/3/1974 the "Madjiliees Moeslimien Suriname" (MMS) was established. Of the five organizations that started in 1972, SMA (Indian) withdrew because they could not agree with some minor matters such as the sighting of the moon for the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr. SIV (Indian) was not accepted because of its Ahmadya affiliation. SIO (Indian) left for the same reasons as SMA (Indian). But later, MMS was joined by SIO (Indian) after it seceded from SIV (Indian), FIGS (Javanese) and PJIS (Javanese). Thus, at present MMS consists of the following organizations :

1 - The Ashafia Islam (AI) ;

2 - Stichting der Islamitische Gemeenten in Suriname (SIS) ;

3 - Federatie van Islamitische Gemeenten in Suriname (FIGS) ;

4 - Surinaamse Islamitische Organisatie (SIO) ; and

5 - Perserakatan Jamaah Islamiyah Suriname (PJIS).

All the major four Javanese organizations are MMS members, whereas only one out of the major four Indian organizations (SIO) is member.

MMS has a rotating leadership, with presidents elected for a one-year period. Every participating organization keeps its autonomy of action. Decisions are taken on the principle of Shura. The first MMS President Aman Ramein, followed by Dr. Farasara, Dr. Isaac Jamaludin (one of these writers), Mr. William Soemita, etc...

The task of MMS is to unite the Muslims of Surinam and coordinate their action. Indeed, all constituting organizations carry out the same tasks and have the same goal : the effective spreading of the

Islamic Message. As MMS represents most Surinamese Muslims, it is considered by the Surinamese Government as their representative. Thus, MMS advises that Government in all matters concerning Islam, such as the fixing of the Muslim holidays among other matters.

Eventually, all Muslim organizations of Suriname would join MMS as coordinating their efforts would help them reach their common goals and strengthen the presence of Islam in Surinam.

2 - Islamic Students Organization Suriname (ISOS)

The "Islamic Students Organization Suriname" (ISOS) was founded in August 1985. It is open to all Muslim students above 15 years of age having an education level of 3rd year Junior High School and above. In 1991, there were about 250 Muslim University students in Surinam.

The aim of ISOS is to study Islam on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah; to promote a better understanding of Islam by both Muslims and non-Muslims; and to strive for a stronger unity and cooperation among the various Islamic organizations in Surinam by giving the example as youth.

At the beginning of 1987, ISOS opened a provisional library and started lending out Islamic books in an organized way. They had a collection of about 300 books in English and Dutch. Since then, the students collected much more books.

ISOS has several hundred members, both boys and girls. They come from all Muslim organizations and many are revert. The SOS language is Dutch, the official language of the country. One of the first ISOS presidents was Faiq Lall Mohamed. In 1990, the President was Faisal Abdul-Wahid.

ISOS has an important role in integrating the youth in one Surinamese Muslim Community. It has excellent relations with Muslim student organizations in the Caribbean, the USA, Europe, and the Muslim-majority countries.

The few Muslims of Arab origin who live in Surinam did not establish separate organizations. They are members of the Indian or Javanese organizations.

7 - The Mosques in Surinam

Muslim contract laborers remained faithful to Islam. Shortly after their arrival, they built shacks for prayers near their living quarters. After the end of their contracts, those who remained were able to build small mosques in various villages. The oldest mosque in Surinam was established around in 1885 in the village of Marienburg in the Commewijne District. The first mosque in Paramaribo was built in 1930 by SIV.

At present, there are about 250 Mosques in Surinam distributed as shown in Table 7.1. Of these about 200 belong to the Javanese Community, 40 to the Indian Community and 10 to the African Community. However, this distribution is not as rigid as it looks, as mosques are open to all Muslims. Many have an ethnically mixed following, especially the 20 Mosques controlled by the Tablighi Jamaat.

Table 7.1 : Mosques in Surinam in 1991

Assoc.	Mosques Nb
SIS	75
FIGS	70
AI	35
PGIS	12
SMF	12
SI0	9
SMA	13
Others	24
Total	250

The mosques of Surinam vary in size from the small ones, which are the majority, to monumental buildings that are the pride of the Muslim Community of Surinam.

One of the largest mosques is the Kankantriestraat Mosque (KM), where the SMA headquarters are located. It was first built in 1950 and expanded in 1955, and again in 1984. KM is always very active. On Fridays more than 200 people join in the congregational prayers, whereas on Eid days the faithful are in the thousands. KM had a series of outstanding Imams such as Hadji Karamot Khan (1950 - 1969) ; Mawlana Kadri (1969 - 1972), Hadji Halladin (1972 - 1974), Abdussubhan (1974 - 1990) ; etc... KM is considered the Jami Mosque of Paramaribo.

Other important SMA mosques are the Calcuttastraat Mosque whose Imam was D. Rahmanbhan, and the Crommelinstraat Mosque, both in Paramaribo.

The major SIO mosques are the Tourtonne Mosque in Paramaribo and the Jami Mosque at Livorno (4 km from the center of Paramaribo). An important SIO Mosque, the Zoorg-en-Hoop Mosque, is controlled by Creole revert, SIO members in this vicinity.

The SIV Ahmadis control 15 mosques. Their headquarters are in the Keizarstraat Mosque in Paramaribo, a very large mosque indeed. The oldest mosque of Surinam, the Indaya Mosque the Imdadya Mosque of Paramaribo, built in 1930, was taken over by the Ahmadis along with SIV in 1972. It is a beautiful building whose original core was expanded later. Camerul-Islam Mosque, built in 1967, is the third Paramaribo mosque controlled by the Ahmadis.

If only the larger mosques are considered, their number is about 150, distributed by organization and district as shown in Table 7.2

Table 7.2. : Mosque Distribution in Surinam

District	SIS	FIGS	AI	PJIS	SMF	SIO	SMA	Others	TOTAL
Surinam	11	8	-	-	4	3	6	8	40
Paramaribo	7	8	1	-	3	3	3	4	29
Nickerie	7	2	2	1	2	-	2	3	19
Marowijne	2	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	5
Brokopondo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pura	5	9	-	-	-	-	-	3	17
Commewijne	7	-	8	1	3	-	1	-	20
Saramacca	7	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
Coronie	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	47	40	11	3	12	6	13	18	150

As expected, the largest number of mosques occurs in districts of largest Muslim population, namely Surinam and Paramaribo. There are 69 mosques in these two districts, or 46% of the total, whereas their Muslim population corresponds to around 60% of the total population of Surinam.

The main activities of the mosques are regular congregational prayers, Friday prayers, Thursday night gatherings, taraweeh prayers during Ramadhan, celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Adha and Meelad-un-Nabi (Prophet's birthday), publishing periodicals (SIS and SIO), printing booklets in Dutch on Islamic topics and organizing public lectures and youth camps.

8 - The Islamic Schools in Surinam

After the mosque, the most important Islamic institution is the Islamic School. Most mosques in Surinam have madrasahs where basic Islamic education, including Arabic and Qur'an reading, is given in the evening, usually three times a week. About 10,000 Muslim children are covered by this Islamic teaching, as each madrasah serves about 50 children.

Some Muslim associations give basic training sessions on Islam to Muslim youth during school vacations. Others organize youth camps

regularly, for boys and girls, to train them to live a full Muslim life for several weeks.

However, the Surinamese Muslim Community was not content with thus level of Islamic education for their children. They worked to establish full-time Islamic schools that give the Government official educational program along with daily Islamic education. Two Islamic organizations succeeded in establishing full-time Islamic schools: SIS and SMA. The location of these school and the number of their students for 1994 are given in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 : Full-time Islamic Schools in Surinam in 1994

District	Assoc.		Total	Students Nber
	SIS	SMA		
Surinam	-	-	-	-
Paramaribo	1	3	4	1,500
Nickerie	-	-	-	-
Marowijne	1	-	1	600
Brokopondo	-	-	-	-
Para	1	-	1	600
Commewijne	1	-	1	600
Saramacca	-	-	-	-
Coronie	-	-	-	-
Total	4	3	7	3,300

Table 8.1 shows that Islamic schools are present in four district, including Commewijne where Muslims are in absolute majority, and Para where they are probably in majority as well. The other two districts, Paramaribo and Marowijne have average Muslim percentages, but the second largest number of Muslims in any district for Paramaribo. However, it is surprising to note the absence of any Islamic schools in Surinam, Nickerie and Saramacca districts in spite of their large Muslim populations.

The four SIS schools are state-aided primary schools, totaling 2,400 children between age 6 and 12. Only basic Islam is taught in them because of the unavailability of suitably qualified Arabic teachers. Furthermore, only about 840 children (35%) in these schools are Muslim.

In 1990, the Surinam Government donated to SIS a parcel of land in Paramaribo to erect a modern school in replacement of its old and dilapidated one. SIS proceeded to collect the funds and started building the new school on the donated land.

The SMA School Complex is adjacent to its beautiful Kankantriestraat Mosque in Paramaribo. In 1960, with the help of the state, SMA started building a Kindergarten, a primary and a secondary school. The number of children in these schools are now respectively 100 (4 to 5 years old), 500 (6 to 13 years) and 300 (13 to 18 years). About 40% of them are Muslim, or around 360 out of a total of 900. However, Arabic language and Islamic studies are not included in the curriculum. Instead, interested children (Muslim and others) are taught on week-ends these subjects.

9 - The Return of Africans to Islam

Muslims came to Surinam for economic reasons. The early migrants, though not very educated, were ambitious and motivated in improving their living conditions. During the colonial period, they faced difficulties preserving their Islamic way of life and the heritage bequeathed to them by their forebears, due to the absence of any Islamic environment. With time, the non-Muslim prevalent environment has, to some extent, affected the younger Muslim generations and encouraged their assimilation into the existing social set of values.

The third Muslim generation witnessed the emergence of a Muslim intelligentsias and professionals, thought according to the Western

educational system. Thus, the gap became wider between the rising Muslim generations and the first migrant one. Despite these adverse factors, Muslims were able to establish jamaats, mosques and madrasahs. Today, they have the advantage of the presence of da'is and good contacts with the Muslim World.

The "International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations" (IIFSO), based in Kuwait, and having a regional office in Washington, DC, (USA), in cooperation with the "Caribbean Islamic Secretariat" in Trinidad, is assisting the Surinamese Muslims in Dawah activities. The "World Islamic Call Society" of Libya initiated da'wah in the interior of the country with "Bush Negroes". They built for them a small mosque. Since 1973, there has also been irregular contacts with Saudi Islamic institutions such as Rabitat-Ul-Alam-Al-Islami and Dar-ul-Ifta.

During the long 200 years of Christian colonization, only Christianity and Judaism enjoyed legal status. Furthermore, Christianity was imposed on the enslaved Africans in Surinam, until they all became Catholics or Protestants, including the Muslims among them.

Even the "Bush-Negroes" could not escape Christianization, as the Roman Catholic Church sent priests and teachers to live with them in the bush and train their children to become missionaries. They built for them schools, hospitals and vocational facilities with funds raised by Catholics in the Netherlands. Since the 1960's, American Catholic missionaries started to come and join hands with the Dutch. A Christian group has established a flying missionary service to reach the most remote areas with small aircrafts, preaching Christianity to "Bush-Negroes" through medical care and social services.

Nevertheless, there is fertile ground for Islamic Da'wah in Surinam as those citizens of African origin, especially the "Bush-Negroes", have a positive attitude towards Islam. Since 1973, da'wah efforts started in Surinam in spite of the lack of the necessary facilities such

as enough Islamic centers with libraries, bookstores, and properly built classrooms.

In 1990, SIO established a mosque in Zoorg en Hoop, a suburb of Paramaribo, where the khutba and lectures are given in the Surinamese and Dutch languages. This mosque is controlled by Creole Muslims who number in this jamaat about 300 persons.

In 1991, the Surinam branch of the World Islamic Call Society (WICS) of Libya started a Da'wah program for the "Bush-Negroes" by building a mosque for them in the village of Santigron. This mosque is managed by a "Bush-Negro" Muslim jamaat of about 100 revert. Attached to the mosque is a small Islamic school for 50 "Bush-Negro" children. The International Islamic Federation of Students Organizations (IIFSO) helped by sending them a Ghanaian Imam who is doing an excellent work.

At present several thousands Africans have returned to Islam in Surinam, including many distinguished citizens. Their numbers will certainly increase greatly in the 1990's.

10 - Muslim Social Activities

Muslims brought with them to Surinam their diversified cultures and traditions as well as their problems.

In the case of the Javanese, there exists three variants of religious groups : the Abangan ; the Santri ; and the Prijaji.

The Abangan do not attend regularly to their Islamic religious duties. They keep some animist and Hindu traditions, such as the "Slametan". This is a ritual feast, centered around a sacred meal. It is a sophisticated but simple expression of communal solidarity toward the spirit world. Various dishes of food are served. The "Kaum" (Imam) recites the Qur'an. The Shahada is pronounced in unison by all present, and regular congregational Islamic prayers are held. At the

end of this ceremony, both the blessings of Allah and the spirits are invoked.

The Santri are devout Muslims. They perform their religious duties regularly, and are aware of their responsibility toward the social and cultural progress of the Muslim Community. They know more about Islam and some of them know Arabic. They are much fewer in number than the Abangan, and are usually older people. However, they take part in the Slametan. The Kaum in the Slametan is always a Santri, and the Santri are very much respected by the Abangan.

The Prijaji are members of the hereditary aristocracy. They are also influenced by Hindu and Buddhist mysticism. There are no Prijaji in Surinam.

In the case of Indians, there are Brelwis and Deobandis. The first are more influenced by mysticism, whereas the latter are accused of Wahhabism. The Sufi orders of the Indian subcontinent are also present in Surinam, especially the Qadri.

The most serious division introduced by the Indian Community is the presence of Ahmadis and Qadianis. These are followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1839 - 1908). The former claim he is a Mujaddid, the latter believe he is a Prophet. Both have been excommunicated from Islam by all Sunni and Shia 'ulema of the world. In Surinam there are Ahmedis who control SIV by practically no Qadianis.

An important Muslim tradition is circumcision, called "sunnat", and celebrated by all Muslims of Surinam as elsewhere. The term sunnat indicates the entering of the child into the religious community of Muslims. Sunnat celebrations are very elaborate and second only to marriage ceremonies.

For a long time, Muslim marriage was not legal for the colonial Government of Surinam, since Islam was not a "Recognized Religion" then. The children born from these marriages were thus considered illegal by colonial authorities. It was the Dutch Governor Kielstra who

removed this injustice between the two World wars by introducing the marriage ordinance act for Muslims (and another for Hindus). Since then, Muslims could perform their marriages according to their beliefs and customs. They had only to register those marriages at the Government Registration Office.

The marriage ceremony usually takes place in the Mosque, or at the home of the bride. After a communal lunch for the members of the two families and their invitees, the Imam gives a marriage sermon, usually in Urdu or Javanese, sometimes in Dutch or Surinamese, followed with prayers and reading from the Qur'an. Then, the bride and the groom sign the marriage registry. Usually, the Imam is the marriage celebrant. He makes sure to perform the marriage as required by the sunnat : consent of both husband and wife, the presence of at least two witnesses and the declaration of the marriage to all as a marriage performed as required by the Qur'an and the Sunnat.

Since 1970, Eid-ul-Fitr has been declared by the Government of Surinam as National Holiday for the entire country. It is called "Bodo" or "Lebaran" by the Javanese. All Muslims participate in its festivities, whether they have fasted the Ramadhan (called "Pasa" by the Javanese) or not. Indeed, among the Javanese, only the Santri fast. As it is a holiday for the country, even non-Muslims celebrate it. Radio stations broadcast Javanese music. Muslims crowd the mosques, accompanied by their children, all in their best dresses. After prayers they visit each other, stressing their solidarity and forgetting their divisions.

Other Islamic holidays which are celebrated by all Muslims with no less activities than Eid-ul-Fitr, are Eid-ul-Adha and Meelad-un-Nabi (the birthday of the Prophet, s.a.w.).

Most Javanese Muslims are agriculturist, mainly rice growers. Most those of Indian origin are city dwellers and are traders. Many Muslims rose to the highest scale of the Surinamese society in wealth and influence. Thus, Muslims in Surinam are completely integrated in

end of this ceremony, both the blessings of Allah and the spirits are invoked.

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the society and form an integral part of it as they are found in all walks of life.

11 - Other Activities of the Muslim Community in Surinam

One of the major Surinamese Islamic institutions is the "All Muslim Organization of Surinam" (AMOS), headed by all Mohammed, a former Private Secretary at the Military Headquarters. AMOS, governed by a Board of Muslims, is a foundation funded by the Surinamese Government to help the Muslim Community in social and cultural matters.

AMOS headquarters are located in a large building, housing a basketball court and other sporting facilities with seating accommodations for several hundreds people. It has also a conference hall, a cafeteria, hostel facilities, a swimming pool and offices. It includes an Islamic reference library. This complex was established with financial assistance from the Dutch Government. The land was Surinam. The offices are made available for those Islamic organizations who have no proper headquarters. This building is also appropriate for youth camps.

The Islamic Call Society of Libya established a branch in Surinam which is very respected by the Muslim Community. It does an excellent work under the responsibility of Mr. Mabrouk. This branch is an Islamic foundation which helps the Muslims of Surinam in religious and cultural matters. It gives grants for the needy to perform Hajj ; it helps some mosques obtain teachers of Islam and Arabic ; it trains "Bush Negroes" in Islam ; etc....

Every healthy Muslim who has the means should perform Hadj, or pilgrimage to Mecca, once in his lifetime. In the 1980's a Hadj-Committee was initiated by SIS and SMA. It coordinates all Hadj activities. Since the late 1980's, it became difficult to fulfill this obligation as foreign currency became scarce in Surinam. Also, as

there is no embassy of Saudi Arabia in Surinam there is difficulty in obtaining visas. One has to travel to Venezuela or the Netherlands, thus increasing the costs of Hadj. However, since 1992, officials of the Saudi embassy in Caracas started to travel to the Caribbean to help the future hadjis. Approximately 20 to 40 Surinamese Muslims perform Hadj yearly.

Surinamese Muslim organizations publish Islamic booklets in Dutch. SIV published a monthly journal, "Al Haq", between 1943 and 1948. Other journals were "Hilal" (1987 – 1989) published SIS and "Risalah Da'wah" by the "Islamic Information Centre Suriname". Since 1994, SIO started publishing a brochure called "Focus on Islam". Most Muslim organizations have small libraries.

Qur'an and Sunnah have provided the guidelines for inter-religious dialogue. Issues separating Muslims from followers of other religions should not build walls of hostility between them. Dialogue, once patiently pursued becomes an instrument of understanding. In this light, Surinamese Muslims cooperated in the establishment of the Inter-Religious Raad in Surinam (Inter-religious Council in Surinam, IRIS). It includes the following religious organizations : the Roman Catholic Church ; the Lutheran Church ; the Reformed Church; the Arya Dewaker ; the Sanatan Dharm, the Madjlies Moeslimien Suriname ; and the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-I-Islam-Suriname.

On 1/1/1994, IRIS started with the morning devotions, to be extended to evening devotions and programs on social and ethical subjects through the ATV-television station. Tolerance for each other's religion and tradition are well respected by all in Surinam.

In 1946, Indian Muslims established the first political Muslim party in Surinam, the "Moeslim Party Suriname" under the leadership of Asgar Karamat Ali and Sheikh Mohamed Jamaludin. This party was later dissolved in the "Verenigde Hindostaanse Partij" (VHP) which brings together Hindus and Muslims.

In 1947, Javanese Muslim established the "Kaum Tani Persatuan Indonesia" (KTPI). Later, they changed its name to "Kerukunan Tulodo Pranatan Inggil", keeping the same initials, KTPI. This party participated in various governmental cabinets. In 1994, they were represented with the three cabinet members in the New Front Coalition, namely the 2nd Vice-President, who is also the AI President, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Minister of Agriculture.

In the 1970's, a new Muslim party emerged, the "Vooruitstrevende Moeslim Partij" (Progressive Muslim Party, VMP). But it was short-lived.

Other political parties of Javanese Muslims are the "Pendawa Lima", in opposition in 1994, and the "Partij Perbangunan Rakijat Suriname" (PPRS), working with KTPI.

In total, there were in 1994 four Muslim Ministers, including one of the Vice-Presidents, in a cabinet of 15 Ministers, and 10 Muslim members of Parliament out of a total of 51.

12 – Conclusions

By any standard, the establishment of Islam in Surinam is a success story. Normal poor Muslims forced to emigrate to alien lands under the most harrowing circumstances were able to keep their Islamic faith alive and to organize in a Muslim community. Compared to those who under similar circumstances and in the same time were brought to nearby French territories and disappeared without trace, some credit will have to be given to the Dutch and British colonists for their relative tolerance compared to the French.

However, Muslims in Surinam still feel uneasy about their future. The two major problems are the better Islamization of the Muslims and the Islamic training of the up-coming generations.

Although da'is started coming to Surinam since 1973, there is a serious lack of facilities for helping them spread Islam. Several ulemas from Indonesia, one from Ghana and four of Surinamese origin, began to work in the country. They need Islamic centers with libraries, bookstores, and classrooms. Most da'is today are voluntary workers with limited time since they have other jobs in order to support their families. They also need more printed Islamic material, especially in Dutch, as well as audio tapes.

Mass media, particularly television could be effectively used and the MMS has weekly programs. But, in comparison to other religious communities, these facilities are under-utilised by Muslims due to limited financial resources.

At present, the condition of Muslim youth regarding religious education is not the best, due to lack of many facilities, including : adequate religious teachers ; adequate equipped madrassahs, as most of the existing ones are ill equipped and their teaching methods are obsolete ; sufficient Islamic literature, especially in Dutch ; funds to carry on the work of teaching and propagating Islam ; teachers with a knowledge of Islam above elementary; teachers others than those serving on a voluntary basis with no obligation to teach regularly ; teachers trained in good teaching methodologies ; a national Islamic Schools' syllabus ; and examinations to assess students.

Therefore, there is a need for employing the services of 'ulema for Islamic training of teachers and the development of syllabi and curricula ; organizing Muslim youth camps, with the help of international Islamic organizations; and developing income generating projects to support da'wah activities.

Hardly 2% of the Muslim Youth receives any Islamic education. Lack of funds is a serious challenge to spreading Islamic education and da'wah. There is a need for protecting Muslim youth against alien and anti-Islamic ideologies and movements. While Arabic is

becoming one of the leading mondial languages, few persons in Surinam can speak it or understand it.

Until the 1980's, the Surinamese Muslim Community was in no position to present Islam to its other fellow citizens in spite of the existing great interest. At present, it tries to carry out this duty, but with limited means.

Another major problem facing the Surinamese Muslim Community is the severe brain-drain due to continuous migration to the Netherland. Nevertheless, this problem is a national one in Surinam as it strikes non-Muslims even more than Muslims. Its solution should be sought on national level by improving the political and economic situation of the country.

In spite of all these difficulties, the Muslims of Surinam look at future with optimism. If they follow in the footsteps of their forebears, they will certainly become one of the most successful Muslim communities in the American continent.

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CHAPTER IX

Islam in Central America

by

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1 - Introduction

Central America is the continental region between the United States in the North and Colombia in the South, using Spanish as its official language. This excludes Belize which is counted with the Caribbean. Central America is made up of seven republics extending from North to South: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. They vary greatly in area and population as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : The States of Central America

State	area in Km ²	Population	
		1951	1991
Mexico	1,973,545	26,200,000	82,764,000
Guatemala	108,889	2,800,000	9,364,000
Honduras	112,088	1,567,000	4,716,000
El Salvador	21,393	1,205,000	5,376,000
Nicaragua	127,664	1,076,000	3,870,000
Costa Rica	50,900	877,000	2,972,000
Panama	76,738	820,000	2,376,000
Total	2,471,217	34,545,000	111,438,000

Mexico is the largest country of Central America, both in population and area. It makes up 79.9% of its total area and 75.8% of its population in 1951 and 74.3% in 1991. El Salvador is the smallest country in area (0.87% of total area) and Panama in population (2.37% in 1951 and 2.13% in 1991). The total area of the Region is 2,471,217 km² and its total population was 34,545,000 in 1951 and 111,438,000 in 1991. Thus, the population of the region is fast expanding as it multiplied more than three times in the last 40 years.

This region is a land bridge between North and South America, limited to the East by the Gulf of Mexico and to the West by the Pacific Ocean. It is a continuation of the Rockies reaching up to an altitude of 5,452 meters in Mexico. Between mountain chains, extending to Guatemala and Panama, are high plateaus, inner lakes and live volcanoes. On the East, a coastal plain spreads from the Texan border, narrowing in the South. Similarly, on the West, a narrow coastal plain extends from California to Panama. There are no large river, and the narrowest part of the land bridge is crossed by the Canal of Panama

Central America extends from 32.35 North to 7.10 North in latitude and has a large variety of climates that can be divided into three types : the "tierra caliente" (hot lands) is tropical and includes the coastal plains from North to South, the "tierra templada" (temperate lands) is located in the highlands, where the highest concentration of population is located ; and the "tierra fria" (cold lands) on the mountain chain with temperate summers and very cold winters

Central America produces a large variety of mineral products such as iron, copper, manganese, lead, silver and zinc as well as gas and oil. It also produces many agriculture products such as cotton, coffee, sugar cane, bananas and rice, as well as meat and wood.

Central America is the birthplace of great human civilizations. The Mayas developed in the Yucatan Peninsula an advanced civilization which built temples, palaces, observatories and cities. They had a

written language and an advanced scientific knowledge. Their glorious history lasted for three millenia and extended through the present states of Chiapas and Yucatan in Mexico and Guatemala. Their cities were eventually overwhelmed by the jungle.

The Olmecs flourished in the low country of the state of Veracruz (Mexico) on the Gulf of Mexico. Rubber, which they discovered, formed the basis of their civilization. They cultivated corn, tomatoes, pineapple, avocados, papaya and vanilla. They were overwhelmed by the Toltecs who eventually extended to lake Atitlan in the North and Guatemala in the South. They built gigantic pyramids rivaling those of Egypt, and their capital, Teotihuacan, was an impressive metropolis.

Other nations developed in other areas, such as the Miskitos in the Caribbean Coast of Honduras and Nicaragua, the Lencas in Nicaragua, the Cunas in Panama, the Kiches in Guatemala, and the Zapotebs, Mistecs, and Tarascans in Mexico. The Aztecs founded their capital in Tenochtitlan in 1325 CE in Mexico. They called themselves Nahua, their country Anahuac, and their language Nahuatl. Their emperor in the 1480's was Moctezuma.

By the turn of their 16th century all this civilization came to a dramatic end under the savage onslaught of the Spanish conquistadores. In 1519, Hernan Cortes disembarked with a small Spanish army on the coast of present day Mexico, established the port of Vera Cruz and marched up to the Mexican Plateau. He conquered Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City), destroyed its culture and its people. They had easy time as the conquered people knew neither horses nor gunpowder. Soon Honduras and Guatemala were conquered in 1524. Then Gil Gonzalez Davila overran Nicaragua in 1526 and down to Panama.

The cruelty of the Spanish conquerors had no bounds. Cauauhtemoc, the Aztec last emperor was cruelly hanged by his crippled feet in the Peten jungle of Guatemala, the people were butchered mercilessly, the survivors were forced into Christianity.

They soon were decimated by smallpox and tuberculosis, unknown before the arrival of the Spanish. In 1562, Bishop Diego de Landa burnt the great treasury of Mayan books and archives as did Bishop Juan de Zumarraga with the Aztec archives and national literature in 1526. The Spanish conquerors were not satisfied to conquer the land and murder the people, they strived to wipe out their civilization from the memory of the survivors, with the same ferocity as they did in the same time with the Andalucians of Spain.

Spain organized its new conquered territories under the name of "New Spain" and ruled it from Mexico City, established on the ruins of Tenochtitlan. New Spain included the present US states of Florida, Texas, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Wyoming and Colorado. The Spanish "Kingdom of Guatemala" extended from the present state of Chiapas to the present border of Panama.

The whole area rebelled against Spain in 1810. In 1821, Mexico became independent, as did the United Provinces of Central America. Mexico lost its northern provinces to the USA. Its present border dates from 1853. Guatemala became independent in 1839. In 1838, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua separated from the United Provinces as independent states. Costa Rica was conquered after its independence in 1821 by Mexico in 1823, and became an independent republic in 1838. As for Panama, it was part of Colombia until 1903 when it was separated from it by the USA for the purpose of building the Canal of Panama.

Muslims came to this region in four waves. The first was pre-Colombian, an article in this series will treat this subject in detail. The second wave was made up by the Moriscos of Andalucia who fled the Spanish Inquisition with Spanish immigrants. They could not survive as Muslims in the conquered lands. The third wave started in the second half of the Nineteenth Century and lasted until after World War I. Most of these Muslims came from Greater Syria, especially

Lebanon and Syria proper, but also from Palestine. The fourth wave came after the 1960's mostly from Palestine and Lebanon, and is still going on. Since the 1980's, local people started converting to Islam. They are becoming more and more important in the Muslim scene.

The information in this chapter came from different unpublished reports of people who visited the Region and are in close contact with its Muslim population. This author visited Panama on 5-6 January, 1974. He also has been continuously in contact with the Muslim communities of all the seven states of the Region.

2 - Islam in Mexico in the Past

Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country of the world and the third largest country of the American continent. Its capital, Mexico city, is a conglomeration of 15 million people, almost the fifth of the population of the country. Other major cities are Guadalajara (3 million), Monterrey (2.5 million), Netzahualcoyotl (2.5 million) and Puebla de Zaragaza (1 million). The country is divided into 32 states and territories. Most of the people are mestizos and are nominally Catholics. Protestants number about two million and are increasing. The modern history of Mexico is characterized by continuous struggle between the Catholic Church and the Mexico State. In 1857, Mexico disestablished the Catholic Church as state religion and in 1917 it confiscated its land properties. In the period 1929 - 1931, the State went as far as closing all the churches in the country.

The first known wave of Muslim immigration to Mexico came with the Spanish conquerors in the 16th Century. They were the persecuted Andalucian crypto-Muslim (Moriscos) who fled from the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition in their homeland. Some, such as Estevanico (1500 - 1539) who helped Francisco Vazquez de Coronado (1510 – 1549) explore New Mexico (now in the US), came as soldiers.

Others were craftsmen and traders. Most were males who had to marry locally, most often Amerindian girls. They practised in Mexico "taqiya" (hiding their true beliefs) as they did in Spain itself.

These Muslim immigrants brought with them their art and know-how, especially their knowledge of irrigation and construction. As the Spanish State became aware of their presence in the new colony, they established in 1571 the Catholic Inquisition in Mexico. Many Muslims in Mexico were burned alive because they refused to become catholic. It is estimated that about 50 Muslims have been thus martyred in the period 1574 - 1815.

The descendants of the Andalucians could not remain Muslim under these tragic circumstances. But they left an important heritage : the ornate and lovely designs found on the buildings in Mexico and their influence in architecture and the manufacture of furniture. Their style, the Mudejar (Mudajjan : the tamed one) style, with its twinned windows, floor and wall tiles, as well as in ceilings, became now integral part of Mexican culture.

The diffused Morisco presence in Mexico is the reason of the workmen's riots that broke out in Mexico City during the 1620's as the result of the expulsion of a large number of Moriscos from Spain in 1609 - 1615 by King Philip III. Many of the expellees found their way to Mexico, giving tough competition to local craftsmen.

The Andalucian presence is also seen in the new toponomy of Mexico. The second largest city in the country is Guadalajara (Wadi Al-Hijarah : Stone River in Arabic). There is also a Cordoba in the country. Puebla is a center of the most refined type of Mudejar workmanship. And Matamoros (Moor-Slayer), a town facing Brownsville (Texas) on the Rio Grande, named after a Mexican general (1779 - 1814), gives an idea of the hatred the Spanish establishment had for the Muslims of that time. A shameful name that should have been changed.

The architectural legacy of Andalucian Muslims in Mexico has been described by the Mexican writer Manuel Toussaint in his work "El Arte Mudejar en America" (Mudejar Art in America). Another Mexican writer, descendant of Moriscos, Pascual Almazan (1813 - 1835), published in 1970 a novel entitled "Un Hereje y un Musulman" (a Heretic and a Muslim) whose action took place around Tajin in the 16th century. The work gives a glimpse of the life of Andalucians in Mexico during that period and is full of traditional clichés about Islam and Muslims.

After the independence of Mexico in 1821, the first Mexican statesman who attempted to promote religious freedom was Benito Juarez (1806 - 1872). He was a full-blooded Zapotec Amerindian, trained by a liberal Italian bookbinder in Oaxaca City. In 1857, Juarez rose to become President of the Mexican Republic. He was finally captured and executed by the French-supported Emperor Maximilian, the Austrian prince the conservators wanted to install as Emperor of Mexico.

Napoleon III of France in his eagerness to install Maximilian sent him an army which included many Algerians and some Egyptians as well. Napoleon III sought the help of Khedive Ismail of Egypt who obliged. Thus, on 9/12/1862, 447 Egyptians including a commander, a captain, an interpreter and 15 corporals embarked on the ship "La Seine" in Alexandria. They reached Veracruz in Mexico on 23/2/1863. The Algerians were installed by the French at Veracruz, Soledad and Tigeria.

As the Juarez army withdrew to the interior, Maximilian troops, including about 100 Egyptian Muslim soldiers, entered Mexico City on 10/6/1863. By the time Maximilian declared himself emperor, he sent hearty thanks to the remaining 234 Egyptian soldiers in his army.

In 1865, Napoleon III requested more Egyptian soldiers to Khedive Ismail who obliged by sending him about 1000 more Egyptian and Sudanese soldiers. This number was reinforced in 1866 by another

100 Egyptian and 100 Algerian soldiers. Thus, about 2000 Muslim soldiers (Algerians, Egyptians and Sudanese) took part in the war between Juarez and Maximillian in Mexico. They remained in the country until 1867. Most of the surviving Muslim soldiers returned home after the war. They landed in the French port of Saint Nazaire in May 1867 and were received by Napoleon III with great honors.

What is left of this event in Mexico is not clear. However, after the victory of Juarez, the country was opened to Arab immigration, as after 1857, the Mexican State did not care any more about the objections of the Catholic Church. Many Arabs arrived from Greater Syria. Several were Muslims, but most were Christians. In 1908, Mohammed Djinguiz estimated the number of Muslims in Mexico to be 1,050 persons : 747 Chinese, 290 Syrians, 6 Moroccans, 5 Philippinos, 1 Persian and 1 African. It is not clear how the Chinese Muslims came to be in Mexico in such large numbers. They do not seem to have left any trace at present.

Many of the descendants of these first Arab immigrants rose in the social ladder of Mexico to the highest levels, most are descendants of Christian Arabs. One of the most prominent is Plutarco Elias Calles (1877 - 1945), of Lebanese origin. He was born in the State of Sonora, adjacent to California in the USA. Calles became President of the Mexican Republic in the period 1924 - 1928, after the Mexican Revolution.

More Arab immigration reached Mexico between the two World Wars. When Akram Zu'ayter visited the country in the period between February 13 and April 17, 1948, he met a great number of Arab descendants. He estimated the number of Arabs in Mexico to be 35,000, belonging to all denominations present in Greater Syria, but mostly Christian ones. Muslims could then be estimated to be the tenth of this total. Zu'ayter met Arabs all across Mexico. He mentions many Arab organizations including Muslim members, but not a single Islamic organization in the country.

In Mexico City there was "The Lebanese Union" headed by Luis Sayegh and including among its most known leaders Abdul-Ahad Khoury and Saleem Abboud. There was also the "Akkar Union", including Mahfoudh To'meh, Milhem Ashkar and Abdullah Al-Abrash. The "Deir Al Qamar Association" was led by Wadi' Al-Ghareeb. The "Orthodox Cooperature Association" included Mouneer Qishtah. The Druze had two organizations : the "Druze League" led by Wadi' Abdul-Hassan and the "Sons of Jabal Al-Arab Association" headed by Yusuf Saraya. Three associations were frankly political : the "Syrian National Party" including Alex Mabyad ; the "Friends of the Lebanese Falenges Club" headed by Jameel Kayrouz ; and the "National Social Party". One organization gathered the second generation Mexicans of Arab origin : the "Mexican Arab Youth Organization", including the lawyer Fidel Younes, Pedro Harb and Carlos Musallam, among others.

The Arab Community had four papers, one in Spanish called "Al-Ameer , owned by Alfonso Asward ; the three others in Arabic are "Al-Gorbal", owned by Hanna Bishara Al-Nasiri, "Al-Faraed", owned by Khalid Nasr and Dawud Musallam Al-Shartuni, and "Al-Qistas" owned by Fareed Saleem. There was also an Arab radio run by Saleem Abboud, and an Arab Primary School owned by Saleem Badra, where the official Mexican curriculum is taught along with the Arabic language.

Many Arabs were in high position in the establishment in Mexico city in 1948, Najeeb Sam'an, an Arab Christian Orthodox, born in Mexico of Lebanese parents, was at one time head of Parliament. Francisco Sarkis, originally from Ashqut in Lebanon, was another deputy in the Mexican Parliament. Dolores Haduan, originally from Daraya (Lebanon) was judge in the High Court. The ambassador of Mexico in Venezuela, Eduardo Safa, was originally from Deir-al-Qamar (Lebanon).

Mexico City had many wealthy Arabs. Among them was Michel Al-'Abd, who owned many textile factories. Qablan Al-Makkari, originally from Zghorta (Lebanon), owned more than 20,000 heads of cattle in his ranches. The city had three large Arab restaurants of which "Al-Sheikh Restaurant" was the most famous. Finally, there was in the center of Mexico City an old large watch on which was written in Arabic and Spanish "Gift of the Ottoman Community to the Mexican State".

On 15/3/1948, Zu'ayter established in Mexico city a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" headed by Sheikh Izzat Sa'b.

In the Coahuila State, there was in its capital, Torreon, an "Arab Club" headed by Ali Sobh. The head of the Chamber of Commerce of the city was Alexander Safa, a Mexican originally from Nabatiyah (Lebanon). Zu'ayter established a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine", headed by Zin-Al-Abideen Shammut, a Muslim originally from Lebanon. Another "Committee for the Defense of Palestine", headed by Ahmed Zin-al-Din, was established in Saltillo. There were Arab communities with many Muslims in Monclova and San Pedro de las Colonias as well.

In the Tamaulipas State, there was in Tampico an "Arab Club" headed by George Shamlat and a "Lebanese Club" headed by Shukri Nader. There were many Muslims in this city. The Committee for the Defense of Palestine" established on 29/3/1948 in Tampico was headed by Ali Mustafa Al-Ghorani, a Muslim. Other Muslim leaders were Khaleel Ali from El-Bireh (Palestine) and Abdelkader Hassan. Ciudad Mante had also an "Arab Union Club".

In Nuevo Leon State, Arabs were concentrated in its capital Monterrey. Most were from Palestine (Bethleem) and Lebanon. They formed a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" headed by Michael Abdullah Marqas.

In Chihuahua, the capital of the state of the same name, lived many Lebanese from Duma (near Tripoli) and Palestinians. They established the "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" headed by Yusuf Tasha.

In Guadalajara, capital of Jalisco State, a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" was established with Luis Farah, originally from Hasrun (Lebanon), as its president.

Thus, the Muslims of Mexico remained without Islamic organizations and institutions, or any Islamic education. They were continuously assimilated in the Christian majority. This situation lasted until the 1970's.

3 - Islam in Mexico at Present

By 1991, the number of Muslims in Mexico was estimated to be around 40,000, mostly rather nominal Muslims. The majority of the first immigrants were Shias from Southern Lebanon, the others were Sunnis. But both Shias and Sunnis were poorly educated in Islam. The majority came without their womenfolk and had to start families marrying Christian Mexican women. Worse for the preservation of their Islamic identity was their complete lack of Islamic organization : no mosques, no Islamic school and communal activity of any sort. Islam was reduced to the state of a personal religion. The result is that by 1970, Islam looked as if it were extinct in Mexico. Many Mexicans had Muslim last names, but they did not have the slightest idea what Islam was.

By 1970, the situation started to change for the better. Some Mexicans became exposed to Islam in the USA and Spain and converted to Islam. They returned to Mexico to preach it with zeal. The descendants of Arab immigrants regained interest in Islam and many started to seek more information about it at home or by travelling to Muslim countries as tourists. This phenomenon of

Islamic rebirth in Mexico fit the universal pattern going on in the same time around the world.

At present, Islamic revival in Mexico is gaining momentum. Several foci of Islamic organization started in many states, namely, the Federal District of Mexico, Coahuila, Jalisco, Durango, Nayarit, Nuevo Leon, Morelos, and Sinaloa.

A - The Federal District

The Federal District of Mexico City has an area of 6,802 km² and was the home of about 15 million people in 1991. It has a Muslim population of about 20,000, half their number in the country. They are of diverse origins, but mainly Lebanese, Syrians, Egyptians and Mexican converts. Most are Sunnis. The majority of these Muslims are middle class and professionals. Some, such as Abdulkarim El Hachache Bundak, became prosperous. Bundak, a leading businessman, was born in Beirut in 1938 and moved to Mexico City in 1973. His sister heads a department in the General Hospital of the Ministry of Health.

There are many active Muslims in Mexico City who do not belong to any single association, but they live as Muslims and teach Islam to those around them. One among many is Al-Mu'tamid Ortiz Espinosa and his wife I'timad (Mexico City). They embraced Islam in Sevilla (Spain) with the "Yamaa Islamica de Al-Andalus", and returned in 1986 to Mexico City where Al-Mu'tamid teaches at the University.

Since the 1960's, Muslim embassies (Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Iraq and Iran) started celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. They invited the Muslims to join in by using advertisements in the press. The celebrations were held in a different embassy each year, with the ambassador himself or an employee of the embassy acting as Imam for the congregation.

I - The Islamic Center of Mexico (Colonia Polanco)

Ibrahim El-Gohary, born in Alexandria (Egypt) in 1925, emigrated to Mexico in 1973 where he established a prosperous textile factory. In 1984, he established the "Egyptian Club" in a rented apartment capable of accommodating about 180 people, with himself as the president of the association managing it. He received support from the Egyptian Embassy who sent him a trained Imam from the Al-Azhar University of Egypt. This "Egyptian Club" actually functioned as an "Islamic Center", the first of Mexico, with regular Friday prayers and classes of Arabic and Islam. About 50 people take part in the Friday prayers, eids were first organized by the "Egyptian Club" in one of the Muslim embassies, more than 500 people take usually part.

By 1991, the "Egyptian Club" was converted into the "Islamic Center of Mexico" (ICM) with the aim of establishing the first "Mosque Complex" of Mexico City. Its present president is Mohammed Said Rumieh, a Mexican of Syrian origin. At present, ICM is raising funds for the purpose of buying a building to be used as a temporary Islamic center instead of the present rented facilities.

2 - "Al-Burham Association" (Tlalpan)

The late Yasin Burham Ramirez, was a Mexican Muslim who held degrees in business administration and psychology. He was born to Christian parents and converted to Islam around 1979 in Granada (Spain) with the "Society of the Return of Islam in Spain". He moved by 1982 to Mexico and established a Muslim community by preaching Islam to Mexicans. Yasin Ramirez died in February 1994, but his community called "Al-Burhan Association" (BA) expanded greatly. It is made up mainly by Mexican converts, and is becoming one of the largest of Mexico City. Its members are well educated Muslims come from the high socio-economic classes of society. They use rented facilities in Tlalpan as an Islamic Center. They are very active in da'wah, holding lectures on Islam in schools and universities. BA plans to build its own mosque.

3 - Al-Awfiyin Association (Colonia Roma)

The "Al-Awfiyin Association" (AA) was established in the early 1990's by a Turkish Muslim. It is functioning from rented facilities in Colonia Roma of Mexico City.

B - The State of Coahuila

Coahuila State has an area of 149,982 km² and a population of about 2 million in 1991. Its capital is Saltillo. It is limited to the North by Texas (USA), to the West by the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Durango, to the South by Zacatecas and to the East by Nuevo Leon. It is the home of at least 5,000 Muslims, descendants of old emigration, many of them originating from the Shias of South Lebanon. Many live in Torreon, a city of the Coahuila State of about 600,000 people, located on its south-western border.

As seen earlier, Zin-al-Abidin Shamut was the president of the "Committee of the Defense of Palestine" established by Zu'ayter in Torreon in 1948. Among those active in the Arab Community of Torreon was also Ibrahim Mohamed Zain. They were both Shia Muslims. Ibrahim Zain emigrated from South Lebanon to Mexico in 1908. He returned to Lebanon to marry Zainab Shamut, a relative of Zin-al-Abidin Shamut, and both returned to Torreon. They had many children among them Hassan who was born in 1932 in Torreon. Zainab died in 1972 and Ibrahim in 1973 when Hassan was 41 years old.

Hassan Zain studied at the University of Monterrey, graduated as Civil Engineer, and then worked for the Mexican Government. He married a cousin and raised his children as Muslims. Like all the Muslims of Torreon of his age or younger, he did not speak Arabic nor did he know much about Islam.

The turning point occurred when in 1968, a brother-in-law gave him a copy of the Qur'an. He started learning Arabic from a Sunni

Muslim in Monterrey and tried hard with a dictionary to understand it in the original Arabic text. He then started to study Islam.

In 1982, Hassan Zain started a study and prayer group in Torreon. The group met on Sunday evenings in homes with Hassan as leader and teacher. Since 1985, they started meeting on Friday evenings. By 1988, they formed the "Comunidad Islamica de la Laguna". In 1992, with the help of the Muslims of Coahuila State and overseas, especially Iran, they were able to build their "Mosque Complex", the first in Mexico. The building of the Mosque practically resurrected the large Muslim Community of Torreon. The president of the association is at present Elias Serhan Selim.

C - The State of Durango

The Durango State has an area of 123,181 km² and a population of about 1,400,000 in 1991. It is limited to the North by Chihuahua, to the West by Sinaloa and Nayarit, and to the East by Zacatecas and Coahuila. It is the home of several thousands Muslims.

Abderrahman Campos is a Mexican, born in Mexico around 1940. In 1969, he emigrated to the US where he met many Muslims. In 1977, he accepted Islam in Washington D.C. In 1984, he returned to Mexico for the clear purpose of starting a Muslim Community by calling people to Islam. He started in Mexico City a small group and then moved to Durango in 1985. He started in 1986 an Islamic paper in Spanish called "Islam" and established the "Sociedad Islamica de Mexico".

As an example, the issue Vol. 1, No. 9, of "Islam" dated 1/4/1407 AH (5/12/1986) is a ten-page paper with the following main articles : Jamiat Al-Ulum, New Program for the Propagation of Islam ; Islam in North America ; the State of Qatar ; Dramatic Art, Immoral Instrument of Power ; Inscriptions of the Alhambra ; Philosophical and Poetic Texts of Khalil Jabran ; Hadiz of the Prophet (saw) ; El-Hajj Malik Shabbaz, Malcolm X ; Why Terrorism ? ; Fascinating View on the Muslim World ; etc...

D - The State of Nayarit

Nayarit State has an area of 26,979 km² and a population of about one million in 1991. It is limited in the West by the Pacific Ocean, in the South by Jalisco, in the East by Durango and in the North by Sinaloa. Its capital is Tepic.

Mohammed-Ali Anzalda is Mexican, the son of a wealthy family. While studying in London (UK), he met Muslims, studied the Qur'an and decided to embrace Islam. He married an Egyptian Muslim lady and have many children. He returned to Mexico City where he spent much energy in lecturing about Islam. In 1985, he was transferred to the Nayarit Autonomous University in Tepic where he established a branch of the "Sociedad Islamica de Mexico". He translated many Islamic books into Spanish and wrote several articles on Islam.

E - The State of Morelos

Morelos State has an area of 4,950 km² and a population of about 1.2 million in 1991. It is located to the South of the Federal Capital District and its capital is Cuernavaca. A group of Muslim converts was formed in this city. They bought a piece of land and plan to build a mosque.

F - Other States

At present, Muslim associations are in the stage of formation in Mazatlan (Sinaloa), Monterrey (Nuevo Leon), and Guadalajara (Jalisco) and most probably in other towns as well.

4 - Islam in Guatemala

Guatemala is the second largest country of Central America. It is located between Mexico to the North, Belize and the Gulf of Mexico to the East, Honduras and El Salvador to the South, and the Pacific

Ocean to the West. Its largest and capital city is Guatemala City (1 million people). In July 1993, the total population of Guatemala was 10,446,000. Most of the country is mountainous. It is divided into 22 administrative departments. The climate is tropical, hot and humid in the lowlands, cooler in the highlands.

Guatemala is rich in natural resources as it produces petroleum, nickel, rare woods, and fish. About 60% of its people speak Spanish, whereas 40% speak around 18 Amerindian languages. Only 8% of the population are of European origin. Most people are nominally Catholics, but many are Protestants, or follow Mayan religions. There are about 1,000 Muslims.

Arab emigration from Palestine and Lebanon to Guatemala started on the turn of the 20th Century. However, most immigrants were Christians and their numbers were never large, reaching several thousands only. They were tradesmen and were concentrated in Guatemala City. Until the 1980's, they failed to organize neither as Arabs nor as Muslims. They did not establish any Islamic institutions.

When Akram Zu'ayter visited Guatemala on April 17 - 22, 1948, he found a prosperous Arab Community, most hailing from Palestine (Ramallah, Betleem, Tiberias) and many from Lebanon. Most were Christian, but many were Muslim. Zu'ayter helped them organize a "Committee for the Support of Palestine", with Salvador Abul-Iraj as President, Georges Al-Massiss as Vice-President, Butros Ma'di as Arabic Secretary, Sulayman Al-Habb as Spanish Secretary, Jaleel Hanna Daoud as Treasurer, Mohammed (Solomon) Dari as Assistant-Treasurer.

It is not clear how the above Committee fared later. But by the 1970's, it was clear that Islam was practically extinct in Guatemala, as no Islamic associations were ever established nor any Islamic institution was ever built in the country.

In 1983, a small group of Muslims of Palestinian origin rented a small apartment in Guatemala City and used it as a temporary mosque,

the first ever in the country. They started Friday congregational prayers and classes in Arabic and Islam.

Eventually, they organized as the "Mezquita de Al-Daawa Islamica de Guatemala" (MDIG, the Muslim Da'wah Mosque of Guatemala). In 1987, MDIG was legally registered as a religious organization.

The Muslims of Guatemala showed up for the first time in Islamic meetings held in Mexico City and Bogota. As the number of MDIG members increased, the first apartment was replaced by a larger one. Furthermore, MDIG secured the help of the Egyptian Ambassador in receiving a full-time trained Imam, the first in Guatemala.

Then, MDIG organized a class-room to teach children twice a week Arabic and the principles of Islam, and established an Islamic library. Furthermore, to increase their cohesion, Muslims gather every other week in a picnic outside town, including men, women and children, where they pray Zuhr together and listen to a lecture on Islam.

Eids are celebrated in the Islamic Center. The occasion is used to give lectures on Islam and to increase the knowledge of the faithful. This Islamization process of descendants of old immigration has been made possible by the continuous trickle of new immigrants from Palestine. These are well educated and Islamically committed young men and women.

Later, one Muslim gave the MDIG facilities in the second floor of a building he owns in Guatemala City to use as temporary mosque free of charge. MDIG now plans to build a Mosque Complex, the first in Guatemala. It started a fund-raising campaign for the purpose.

The MDIG Executive Committee is made up by Zakariyah Salem (President), Fayed Said Jweiles, Saadeldin Abdullah Olati (Secretary), Mostafa Nagib Hamdi, Hassan Abdullah Mobarak (Treasurer), Hisham Osman, Sameer Abdel-Rauf, etc...

At present, the Muslim Community of Guatemala seems very well knit. There are few mixed marriages outside the Community, and

those Guatemalan women who married Muslim men are usually convert to Islam and are well integrated in the Muslim Community. Many Muslim women in Guatemala wear hijab, a noticeable situation with respect to the rest of Central America. Furthermore, the Muslim Community is like a large family where social links are very strong.

Economically, the Muslim Community could be divided into two classes: the rich which are about the tenth of the Community, and the middle class who are most of the rest. There are practically no poor members in the Muslim Community. Most MDIG members hail from Palestine, some come from Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Pakistan or are Guatemalan converts to Islam. They all share in the running costs of the Islamic Center.

The Muslim Community of Guatemala is young, prosperous, Islamically-committed and looks with optimism to its future.

5 – Islam In Honduras

Honduras is limited to the West by Guatemala, to the South by El Salvador and the Pacific Ocean, to the East by Nicaragua and to the North by the Gulf of Mexico. Its capital is Tegucigalpa (500,000 people) and its second city is San Pedro Sula (400,000 people). The population of the country in July 1993 was estimated at 5,170,000. The land is mostly mountainous in the interior and is a narrow plain on the coasts. The climate is subtropical in the lowlands, temperate in the mountains.

Honduras produces a multitude of natural resources such as gold, silver, copper, lead, iron ore, antimony and coal. It exports timber and fish as well. However, it is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Agriculture accounts for more than 25% of its GDP, employs 62% of its labor force and produces 66% of its exports. Administratively, the country is divided into 18 departments

Ninety percent of the people of Honduras are mestizos (mixed Amerindian and European), about 7% are Amerindian, 2% are Afro-Americans who emigrated mostly from the West Indies and only 1% are of pure European parentage, mostly Spanish. Most are nominally Catholics, about 3% are Protestants. They speak Spanish, the official language, and Amerindian local languages. There are about 1,000 Muslims in Honduras.

Arab immigration to Honduras started on the turn of the 20th Century. Most came from Palestine, specifically from two towns: Bethlehem and Beit Jala. They also arrived from Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. They were dispersed in the country and formed Arab organizations in several towns. Hondurans of Arab origin could be estimated at around 10,000. Many Arab immigrants were Muslim. But as they came without their womenfolk, they formed families by marrying non-Muslim women. As there was no Islamic institutions, Islam was lost among many in the second and third generations. At present, those Hondurans of partly Muslim origin could be estimated to be around 3,000. Of these only about the third could be considered Muslim.

It is only in the early 1990's that Honduras started witnessing an Islamic revival, made possible by new young immigrants from Palestine and Jordan, and conversion to Islam of many Hondurans. Also, Hondurans of Muslim origin started to show new interest in Islam. In the following, the situation of Muslims in different town of Honduras shall be considered.

1- Tegucigalpa (Francisco Morazan)

Tegucigalpa is the capital of Honduras and of the department of Francisco Morazan. It was the home of many Arab immigrants, including Muslims since World War I. When Akram Zu'ayter visited Honduras on May 8 - 31, 1948, he met a thriving Arab Community, including many Muslims from the Barhoum family. However, the only association present was "The Arab Red Cross Committee"

headed by Elizabeth Georges Usfurah, an Arab Christian. Zu'ayter established in this city a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Jameel Murrah as Arab Secretary and Ibrabim Al-Shafi as Spanish Secretary.

In 1994, an "Islamic Association" was established for the first time by the several hundred Muslims who live in Tegucigalpa.

2- San Pedro Sula (Cortes)

San Pedro Sula, the capital of the Cortes Department in the North-East, is the second largest city of Honduras. It is also the center of the largest Muslim concentration in the country. When Zu'ayter visited it in 1948, he met a large Arab Community, including many Muslims. There was a "Committee for the Arab Hour" in the local radio station, made up by Tawfeek Qanawati, Bertha Qanawati, Francisco Jaqman, Lydia Hanzal, Manuel Hanzal, and Antonio Nicoli. No other Arab association was present. Zu'ayter established in San Pedro Sula a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Nicolas Al-Araj as President, Ya'coub Qanawati (Vice-President), Elyas Qattan (Arab Secretary), Elyas Juha (Spanish Secretary). and Francis Abu-Fuhaila (Treasurer).

When Ahmed Saifi of Sao Paulo (Brazil) visited San Pedro Sula in June 1988, he found no Muslim organization. He met many Muslims, including Ali Abdullah (originally Al-Qar'un, Lebanon) a shop owner, Khaled Ali Oweis, who own a manufacturing factory, Mohammed (Miguel) Al-Khateeb, a Palestinian from Jordan who worked in the Jordanian Army, and Abdullah Mohammed Hussein, a utensils shop owner. There was about forty Muslim families, originally from Lebanon, Palestine, Iran and Bosnia and including about ten local Honduran converts. The leader of the converts spent some time in Saudi Arabia learning Islam. Ahmed Saifi urged the Muslim Community to organize and establish its Muslim institution. Al-Khateeb, who was a leader of the Muslim Community, emigrated to Honduras in 1973 and worked as wholesaler in food products.

In 1989, Al-Khateeb took the first initiative by making a room in his house public and started calling it a mosque, inviting Muslims to come and pray with him. This lasted until 1991, when Khalid Ali Oweis helped him rent an apartment to be used as temporary mosque. As the members of the congregation increased in number, they formed the "Islamic Association of San Pedro Sula". By in 1993, the owner of the apartment wanted it back. The Association then rented a room, it is now using as a mosque. Other important members of the Muslim Community are Mohammed Yusuf from Pakistan and Othman Abbas.

Since mid - 1993, the Association started raising funds for the establishment of the "Mosque Complex" of San Pedro Sula. They will be starting the buildings in 1995. Thus San Pedro Sula is developing as the center of Islamic radiation in Honduras.

3- Puerto Cortes (Cortes)

Puerto Cortes is a port on the Caribbean Sea in the Cortes Department. Zu'ayter established in this town in 1948 a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" headed by Yusuf Khaleel Hazboun. There is no Islamic association in this town today, but there are many Muslims.

4- La Lima (Cortes)

La Lima is a small town of the Cortes Department, south of San Pedro Sula. Zu'ayter met in La Lima in 1948 a Muslim Community originary from Qaryut, near Nablus in Palestine including Mohammed Shehateh and Yusuf Ismael.

5- El Progresso (Yoro)

El Progresso is a town of the Yoro Department in the South-East of San Pedro Sula. Zu'ayter met there in 1948 about twenty Arab families originating from Palestine. He formed a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Elias Al-Sawadi as President, George Hanzal (Vice-President), Yacoub Elias Qattan (Arab Secretary), Najeeb Hanzal (Spanish Secretary) and Qais Musa Al-Jabri (Treasurer). There is no Islamic organization yet in El Progresso.

6- Olanchito (Yoro)

Olanchito is located in the eastern part of the Yoro Department. Zu'ayter established with its thriving Arab Community in 1948 a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Gregorio Oustandes Marzaqah, Emilio Shaheen (Secretary) and Issa Bunduk (Treasurer). There is no Islamic institution in this town today.

7- La Ceiba (Atlantida)

La Ceiba, the capital of the Atlantida Department, is a Caribbean port where Zu'ayter met in 1948 a rich Arab Community from Lebanon (Akkar, Tripoli), Syria (Damascus) and Palestine (Nablus). It had an "Arab Red Cross Committee" headed by Miladeh Awdeh. He also established a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Saleem Qawas as President and Badr Deeb as Vice-President.

8- Tela (Atlantida)

Tela is a port in the Department of Atlantida, to the West of La Ceiba, where Zu'ayter found an "Arab Association" headed by George Qassis (an Arab Christian) as well as a "Palestinian Union" with George Qawas as secretary. Zu'ayter established as well a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with George Qassis as President, Ya'coub Qawas (Vice-President) and Michael Qawas (Director). The leading Muslim in town was Abdul-Majeed Hamdi Al-Hashash from Deir Diwan in Palestine. There is no organized presence of Islam in Tela today.

9- Choluteca (Choluteca)

Choluteca is the capital of the department by the same name, not far from the Pacific coast. When Zu'ayter visited it in 1948, he found a large well Arab Community, mostly from Palestine, but no Islamic organization. The Arab community was organized under the "Arab Union Organization" with Jadallah (Domingo) Suleiman Abu-Mahr, Jameel Sam'an Kafiyeh (Secretary), Michael Shehadeh Farah (Vice-

President), and Ya'coub Michael Hanzal (Treasurer). There is no Muslim organization yet in Choluteca today.

6 - Islam in El Salvador

El Salvador is the smallest Central American country in area. It is limited to the North and East by Honduras, to the South by the Pacific Ocean, and to the West by Guatemala. Its capital is San Salvador (500,000 people). The second largest city is Santa Ana (200,000 persons). The country is made up by a high fertile plateau where many volcanos are active, limited by narrow coastal plains. The climate of El Salvador is tropical.

Agriculture occupies 40% of the work force in El Salvador and represents 70% of its exports. The main products are coffee, cotton, sugarcane, maize, bananas and rice. El Salvador has also an important agro-industry producing sugar, textiles and petrochemicals. It produces gold, silver, copper, zinc, iron ore, mercury, tin and coal. The country is divided administratively into 14 departments.

About 75% of the population of El Salvador are Mestizos, 20% are pure Amerindians, and only 5% claim European origin, mainly Spanish. With a density of 250 people per km², El Salvador has the highest density in Central America. It has also the fastest growing population in the region. This leads to continuous emigration to neighboring countries, especially Honduras. Most people are nominally Catholics, but there is a large Protestant minority. About 25,000 Salvadoran are of Arab origin, mainly Christian. The Muslims in El Salvador number about 500.

As elsewhere, Arab immigration to El Salvador started on the turn of the 20th Century, and increased after World War I. It lasted until around 1940. Most immigrants came from Palestine, and some from Lebanon and Syria. Most were Christians, some were Muslims. In 1936, El Salvador put laws discriminating against Palestinians,

Syrians, Egyptians and Iraqis. Nevertheless, the Arab Community, including Muslims, became prosperous through its activity in trade.

Muslim Arabs did not establish any Islamic institution or association. Arab associations were reduced to social clubs, with no education in Islam or the Arabic language. With mixed marriage with non-Muslims, the second and third generations of the few Muslims who arrived in the country became religiously assimilated to the Christian majority. It is only in the 1990's that the country started witnessing a resurrection of Islam. In the following, the situation of Muslims in different cities and town of El Salvador will be considered.

1- San Salvador

When Zu'ayter visited El Salvador from April 22 to May 8, 1948, he found a large Arab Community in its capital, San Salvador. The majority were Christians from Bethleem (Palestine) working in trade. They were polarized between two leading families : the Safias and the Marias. There was a "Palestinian Youth Club" headed by Salvador Hazbun. Zu'ayter established also during his visit a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Jameel (Emilio) Sam'an as Spanish Secretary, and Nawfal Hamdan as Arabic Secretary. There were many Muslims in San Salvador, but no Islamic activity of any kind.

In 1953 was born to a wealthy Christian Arab family a boy they named Armando. Armando Boukeli studied with brilliance until he received his Ph.D. in Chemistry. He also worked in trade until he built up a small fortune.

In 1983, Dr. Armando Boukeli, at the age of thirty, started to develop interest in Islam. He started studying it, visited several Islamic centers in the United States. He then embraced Islam, and made his decision public. In spite of the difficulties he faced with his family, he continued to study Islam until he became highly knowledgeable.

In 1991, single-handedly, Dr. Armando Boukeli opened an "Islamic Center" in one of his buildings in San Salvador and registered it as the "Centro Islamico Arabe Salvadoreño" (CIAS, the Salvadoran Arab Islamic Center). It is a large prayer hall, with offices. Then, Dr. Boukeli put most of his time and energy to build up a full-fledged Muslim Community in San Salvador. The center is opened daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and a lady receptionist answers telephone calls and organizes meetings with Dr. Boukeli to answer questions about Islam.

In the same time, a Palestinian Muslim who speaks both Arabic and Spanish gives classes in Arabic to those who wish to learn the language. He also answers questions about Islam. A daily meeting is held in the center by those who are already Muslim, after the Noon prayer, where different aspects of Islam are discussed from known books. Friday prayers are held regularly with Dr. Boukeli as Imam. The largest weekly meetings of the Muslim Community are from 4 p.m. to Isha time on Saturdays.

By this method and through advertisements in the daily papers, Dr. Boukeli was able to build up a Muslim community of about 100 men and women. Most are converts, others are descendants of Muslims. The majority are educated middle class, including engineers, teachers, medical doctors, lawyers and university students.

CIAS is the nucleus of a very dynamic Muslim Community. They write articles in the daily papers and give lectures. Through their efforts, they were able to make Islam for the first time visible in San Salvador. The Muslim community is very optimistic about its future as their call is well received by the Salvadoran population. CIAS sent young members to study in the Islamic University in Medina (Saudi Arabia) and the International Islamic University (Malaysia).

2- Santa Ana

Santa Ana, the second largest city of El Salvador, is located at 50 km to the North-West of San Salvador, near the border with Guatemala. When Zu'ayter visited it in 1948, he found a rich

Palestinian Community, mostly Christian, which owned most of the shops of the city center. They had established a "Palestinian Youth Club". Zu'ayter established in Santa Ana a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Yusuf Jadallah Maria (President), Iskandar Samur (Vice-President), Kosantin Samur (Arabic Secretary), Jameel Sam'an (Spanish Secretary) and Anton Al-Batarseh (Treasurer). There was no Islamic organization. Still there is none, but some Muslims of Santa Ana, encouraged by the success of San Salvador, are planning to establish one.

3- San Miguel

San Miguel is located at 90 km to the East from San Salvador. Zu'ayter met there in 1948 a Palestinian Community. They owned most shops in the city center. Two pre-eminent families, the Hazbun and the Al-Batarseh, hailed from Rafidieh and Nisf-Jbeil, near Nablus. The main Muslim family were the Abu-Shararahs. There was no Islamic or Arab organization of any type. Zu'ayter establish a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Yusuf Hazbun (President), Yusuf El-Batarseh and Elyas Khouri (Vice-Presidents), Salvador Khouri (Spanish Secretary), Ahmed Abu-Shararah (Arabic Secretary) and Tewfiq El-Batarseh (Treasurer).

The Muslims of San Miguel are today highly assimilated to the Christian majority. They have not yet organized their community.

4- Other towns

In 1948, Zu'ayter met Arab communities in Sonsonate, Ahuachapan, Usulután (most from the Palestinian Hanzal family), and Nueva San Salvador (Santa Tecla), led by the Zablah family. There was no Arab or Islamic organization in these towns. Still there is none today.

7 - Islam in Nicaragua

Nicaragua is limited to the North by Honduras, to the West by the Pacific Ocean, to the South by Costa Rica and to the East by the Caribbean Sea. Its capital, Managua, has a population of about 900,000 people. Other important cities, such as Leon and Granada, are much smaller. In July 1993, the population of Nicaragua was estimated to be 3,987,000 inhabitants. The country is made up on the Caribbean side by an extensive coastal plain rising to central interior mountains. The narrow Pacific coastal plains is interrupted by several volcanoes. The climate is tropical in the lowlands, cooler in the highlands.

Nicaragua's economy is based on the export of agricultural products, mainly cotton and coffee. This sector employs 44% of the work force and accounts for 80% of export earnings, but only 15% of the GDP. Industry employs 13% of the work force and accounts for 25% of the GDP. The country is divided administratively in 17 departments.

About 70% of the people of Nicaragua are mestizos, 10% are African, 5% are Amerindians, and 15% are European, mainly Spanish. About 95% of the population is nominally Catholic. Most of the rest are Protestant. There are about 500 Muslims in Nicaragua. The official language is Spanish, but English and Amerindian languages are spoken on the Caribbean coast.

A small Arab immigration to Nicaragua occurred between the two World Wars and was mainly Christian from Palestine. However, there was among them some Muslim families.

When Akram Zu'ayter visited Nicaragua on May 31 - June 4, 1948, he found an important Arab community in Managua. They established by then the "Arab Union Club" with Yacoub Freij as President and Soleiman Zarouk as Secretary. Zu'ayter established also in Managua a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" with Yacoub Freij as

President, Emilio Freij as Vice-President, Saleem Zarouk as Arabic Secretary, Yusuf Freij as Spanish Secretary, and Yusuf Suleiman Abu-Khater as Treasurer.

Among the leading Muslims of Managua was Mohammed (Manuel) Mahmud, originating from Beit Dakku near Jerusalem. There was no Islamic association, nor any Islamic institution or education at any level in Nicaragua. This situation led to the disintegration of the small Muslim Community and the assimilation of its second and third generations in the Christian majority. Even the "Arab Union Club" seems to have disappeared since then.

In the 1980's, new Muslim immigrants arrived from different districts of Palestine. By 1993 there was about 100 Muslims in Managua alone, all from Palestine, a third from older immigration and two-third from the more recent one. There were 35 families, 15 bachelors and 10 University students. Almost all married couples were made up by both Palestinian husbands and wives. Most Muslims had shops in Ciudad Jardin, a district of Managua, selling textiles and ready-made clothes they import from the Panama Canal Free Zone in Panama, Honduras and El Salvador. They are all well to do, some are rich.

In the early 1980's two Nicaraguan Muslim cousins of Palestinian origin, Ragheb Hassan (born in 1920) and Yusuf Hassan (born in 1929) performed Hajj and visited Jordan with the idea of settling there. After eight years in Jordan, they decided to return to Nicaragua. They became committed Muslims, performing their prayers regularly and fasting Ramadhan scrupulously.

Meanwhile in 1986, some Palestinian Arabs, mostly Muslims revived the "Arab Club" by buying a large house and converting it into club. However, dissensions followed as some wanted to open a bar in the "Club" and others opposed it. The result was that the "Club" closed down, to be reopened only in December 1992.

The concentration of the Muslim Community in Ciudad Jardín, although badly organized attracted many tablighi groups. They were well received as they tried to teach the people the basics of Islam and train them in performing the congregational prayers regularly. But the result of their efforts did not last, as the learned new habits were forgotten after the departure of the group.

The visit of Mustafa Abdul-Ghani Ahmed sent to Managua by the Muslims of São Paulo (Brazil) had a more lasting effect. Ahmed stayed with the Muslim Community of Managua during the months of February and March 1993 (Shaaban and Ramadhan 1413 AH).

Ahmed started the first congregational Friday prayer in Managua held on 29/1/1993 in the "Arab Club" with 25 local Muslims present. Since then, the Friday prayer became regular. He also started teaching Qur'an and Islam to children on Saturdays and Sundays. First, 12 children assisted in the classes, their number increased later. He gave public lectures to adults on Friday evenings at 8:00 pm. During Ramadhan he held taraweeh prayers with about 20 to 25 Muslims present.

Ahmed succeeded in training the Muslim Community to perform regular Islamic activities and build themselves into an Islamic Community. They established an "Islamic Society of Nicaragua" and started collecting funds for buying a house to be then converted into an Islamic Center. The idea of converting the "Arab Club" into an "Islamic Center" was resisted by the non-Muslims in the Arab Community, it was eventually dropped.

Now the Muslim Community of Nicaragua is looking forwards to a bright future. Its main leaders are besides the Hassans, Kadir Samareh, Adli Musa, Tareq Al-Khateeb, Nasrallah Shihab, Shafeeq Salameh, among others. They received the services of a trained Imam, and are already thinking about organizing the Muslims dispersed in the different departments of Nicaragua.

On the other hand, Abdul-Malik, an Afro-Nicaraguan, embraced Islam in the USA in 1978. He returned in the 1980's to Nicaragua where he established a growing Islamic Community made up of revertos in the town of San Miguelito (Department of Rio San Juan).

8 - Islam in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is limited to the North by Nicaragua, to the West by the Pacific Ocean, to the South by Panama and to the East by the Caribbean Sea. Its capital and largest city, San José, has a population of about 300,000 people. In July 1993, Costa Rica had a population of about 3,265,000 people. The country is made up by coastal plains separated by rugged mountains. The climate is tropical with a dry season (December to April) and a raining season (May to November).

The economy of Costa Rica is based on agriculture, mainly coffee, bananas, cotton and sugarcane, accounting for 17% of GDP and 70% of exports. Industrial production accounts for 19% of GDP and is limited to food processing, textiles and clothing, construction materials, fertilizers and plastic products. Costa Rica is divided administratively into seven provinces.

Most Costa Ricans are Mestizos, citizens of African origin account for 2% of the population, Amerindians 1%, and the Chinese 1%. The official language is Spanish but English is spoken around Puerto Limón on the Caribbean coast. About 95% of the population are nominally Roman Catholic, most of the rest are Protestant. There are about 500 Muslims in Costa Rica.

Few Arabs emigrated to Costa Rica, but across the years Muslims from different origins settled in the country. At present the 500 Muslims of Costa Rica hail from many origins, such as Singapore, India, Turkey, Afghanistan, but also Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Iraq. There is also a number of Costa Rican converts to Islam,

especially from among those of African origin. Most Muslims are employees in the public or private sectors. Few are in trade.

Until 1984, there was apparently no Islamic presence in Costa Rica. Then, Tajuddin (Nestor) Baltodani Guillen, a Costa Rican of African origin converted to Islam and started gathering the Muslims in San Jose. Along with about 20 other Muslims, they established the "Asociacion Musulmana de Costa Rica" (AMCR, the Muslim Association of Costa Rica), the first in the country. They registered it on March 20, 1985. The first office bearers were Tajuddin Baltodano Guillen (President), Ms Jalia binte Mohammad (Vice-President), Mohamad Jaffar bin Mohammad (Treasurer), Aziz Ahmed Chaudhry (Secretary) and Jailani bin Mohammad, member. Thus, among the five office bearers one was Costa Rican (the President), three were from Singapore (the Vice-President, the Treasurer and a member), and one was from India (the Secretary). Fifteen of the first twenty members were Malays, most of the rest were of Indian origin.

The AMCR aim was defined as to maintain the services of Islam as per the Sunnah and the teachings of Prophet Mohammed (s.a.w). AMCR approached the Muslim World League (Mecca) for help. The latter sent them in 1986 as Imam, Sheikh Mohamed Rukan Khalfan of Burundi (East Africa). Humeidat, an Algerian Master's student at the University, acted as Imam in 1987.

AMCR started Friday prayers (20 Muslims were usually present) and regular daily congregational prayers in the home of one of its members, a Singaporean. It also started classes and da'wah, and its membership increased mainly through conversion. AMCR even planned to build a mosque and the Singaporean benefactor was planning to grant it a piece of land for the project. Unfortunately, in 1990 his business went into difficulties and he lost all his properties. The room he gave as temporary mosque was then closed. Since then, Muslims in San Jose met only on rented facilities in Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr.

In April 1993, Mustafa Abdul-Ghani Ahmed of Egypt visited San Jose and met with a group of about 25 Muslims of different origins. He urged them to establish a new Islamic association and an Islamic Center. These were from Palestine (6) Libya (4), Algeria (3), Pakistan (3), Afghanistan (3), Costa Rica (2), India (2), Iraq (1), and Turkey (1).

In this meeting, held in the home of Dr. Abdul-Fattah Sase' (a Medical Doctor from Palestine), they elected a committee of five persons to establish the "Centro Islamico de Costa Rica" (the Islamic Center of Costa Rica, CICR). The committee was made up of Dr. Abdul-Fattah Sase', Yusuf Samareh (a tradesman from Palestine), Humaidan Bousiri (from Algeria), Aziz (from Pakistan), and Mohammed Qallali (from Libya). The job of this committee was to seek a center for the community to be used as a temporary mosque and to register CICR as a religious association. They also raised in the same meeting funds for the establishment of the mosque.

Eventually, the committee was able to establish CICR and to open an Islamic Center in San Jose. They also received a trained Imam.

Meanwhile, a convert Muslim community started growing in Puerto Limon (Province of Limon). They established an Islamic association and a Mosque.

Arabic is also taught in the School of Modern Languages. Three teachers teach Arabic in this school, one Costa Rican and two Palestinians, including Dr. Sase'.

There are Muslims in other towns of Costa Rica, but they are not organized.

9 - Panama: Formation of the Muslim Community

Panama is the southernmost country of Central America. It is also the center of Islamic activity for the entire region, although it is the

smallest country in terms of population. It is limited to the West by Costa Rica, to the South by the Pacific Ocean, to the East by Colombia and to the North by the Caribbean Sea. It is crossed from Colon to Panama City by the Canal of Panama between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The population of Panama was 2,579,000 on July 1993. The capital of the country, Panama City, is the largest town in Panama with a population of about 800,000.

Panama is made up by mostly steep, rugged mountains in the interior and dissected upland plains. The coastal areas are largely plains and rolling hills. The East and North-West is covered by a dense tropical forest. The climate is tropical, hot, humid and cloudy, with a prolonged rainy season from May to January and a short dry season from January to May.

The economy of Panama is based on the Canal and the transit trade it generates. Bananas account for 43% of all exports, followed by shrimp (11%), clothing (5%), sugar (4%) and coffee (2%). Agriculture accounts for 10.5% of the GDP and employs 27% of the labor force. Industry is limited to manufacturing and construction activities, petroleum refining, brewing, cement and other construction material, and sugar milling. The country is divided administratively into 9 provinces and one territory (San Blas).

The majority (70%) of the people of Panama are Mestizos, 14% are African Americans, 10% are of European origin and 6% are pure Amerindians. About 85% of the people of Panama are nominally Roman Catholic. Most of the rest are Protestant. Muslims number around 4,500 persons and are of diverse origins. The official language is Spanish. English is spoken as a first language by about 14% of the population, it is widely spread among the rest.

Today, the Muslim population of Panama is made up of three main origins: about 60% are of Indian origin (2,700 persons); 30% are of Arab origin (1,350 persons) and 10% are Panameans, mainly reverters of African origin.

The first known Muslims who emigrated to Panama were Indian workers brought in the beginning of the 20th Century for the digging of the Panama Canal. Most of them were from Bengal, Punjab, and Gujarat. Djinguiz estimated their number to be around 20 in 1908. He also claimed that there were in Panama about 500 Chinese Muslims. But this is doubtful, as they have left no trace. The Indian Muslims being few in numbers and of limited knowledge of Islam, disintegrated as a community and their offspring assimilated in the Christian majority.

However, since the 1920's a new wave of Indian Muslims started to emigrate to Panama. They were tradesmen from Surat in Gujarat. One of the first to arrive was Suleiman Bhiku who arrived in Panama in 1928 and build up a thriving business. He later brought his family members and friends to the point that by 1970, they were almost 200 Gujaratis in Panama. Their numbers kept increasing since then to reach around 2,700 today. They are a well knit Sunni Muslim Community and prosperous in business. Most of them are concentrated in Panama City, working in commerce, some of them being very rich.

Palestinian immigration to Panama started in the 1960's. By 1971 when this author visited Panama their number approached 200, they were mainly in Panama City, but others were scattered all over the country, especially in Colon and David. Their number increased since then to near about the 1,000. They also work in trade.

Lebanese Muslim immigrants to Panama started to come in the 1980's, mostly from Colombia, and more specifically from Micao. Most of them settled in Colon where they worked in trade. Many of them built up fortunes no smaller than those of the Gujaratis in Panama City. Their numbers increased to reach about 300.

There are about 50 other Arab Muslims in Panama. Most came since the 1980's from Syria and settled in Panama City and Colon.

Since the 1980's, a certain number of Panameans of all origins, but mainly African, started to accept Islam. This phenomenon started earlier as some Panameans, without necessarily accepting Islam, started to give Muslim names to themselves and their children. For instance, when this author visited Panama in 1974, the President of the country was Omar Torrijos, the Minister of Health was Ibrahim Al-Sayyid (he was neither Arab nor Muslim), a former chief of Police was named Hassan, etc... Muslim first names were common among school-children, for both boys and girls.

By the 1980's, this cultural phenomenon led to full Islamization. Today, as many as 450 Panamean Muslims are local revert. They came from all classes of society. They did not form separate associations, but most joined the existing ones. One of their leaders is Dr. Abdul-Khabeer Mohammed, a distinguished lawyer of Panama City.

Thus, the Muslim Community of Panama which started very humbly as a very diversified one on the turn of the 20th Century, is developing to become one of the most important in Latin America. It has the advantage of being the union between the Muslim Community of the Caribbean and that of Latin America.

10 – Panama : Islam in Panama Province

Panama Province is located in the Center-South of Panama, on the Pacific Coast. Its straddles the Panama Canal on the Pacific side. It is limited to the North by the Colon Province, to the West by Coclé Province, to the South by the Pacific Ocean, and the East by Darién Province. Muslims are organized in two cities of the province: Panama city, its capital ; and La Chorrera, located to the West of the Panama Canal.

I- Panama City

Panama City is the capital of Panama and its largest city. It has a Muslim population of about 3,000, most from India, more specifically Gujarat. Others are from Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Chad. There are several hundreds Panamean converts as well.

In 1930, the first Muslim organization was established in Panama City by the then small Muslim Indian community. It was named the "Islamic Mission". This first association built the first mosque of Panama on a piece of land received as a grant from one of its members. This mosque was abandoned later, as it became too small for the needs of the Muslim Community.

In 1947, the "Islamic Mission" changed its name to become the "Indo-Pakistani Islamic Association". It went through many difficulties until 1973 when one of the great 'Ulemas of India visited them and advised them to change once more the name of the Organization to become the "Panama Islamic Association" (PIA). This change of name was necessary to take into account the presence of many Muslims who were not of Indo-Pakistani origin.

When this author visited Panama City in January 5 - 6, 1974, the PIA Executive Committee was all made up of Gujarati Muslims. These were Yusuf Bhiku (President), Nizar Patel (Treasurer), and Abdul-Hay Saleh Rawat, Suleiman Yacub Rawat, and Ibrahim Hassan Bhana (members). The leader of the Community was (and still is) uncontestedly Suleiman Bhiku, a great Muslim of great heart and large means. He was a Panamean citizen, like many other Muslims, the owner of Oriental Stores, General Importers and Exporters, Continental Hotel, Salomon's Chain, etc... As mentioned before, he emigrated to Panama City in 1928.

In 1973, PIA rented a large apartment in the center of the city at the cross-section of Avenida Central and Quinta Avenida. It used it as a temporary mosque and an Islamic Center where congregational daily prayers and the Friday prayers were held regularly. About 75 faithful were present in the Friday prayers. Children were taught Islam in this

Center by two hafiz whose salary was paid by PIA. At that time, there were about 500 Muslims in Panama, of which at least 400 were in Panama City, half of them from Gujarat.

PIA had also a Muslim cemetery that they bought with funds they raised among their members.

In May 1974, PIA raised funds from its members, of which Suleiman Bhiku contributed for nearly the half. They purchased a 200 m² plot in 19th Avenue, adjoining the main business center in Central Avenue. The purpose was to build on it a "Mosque Complex" including shops in the ground floor to used as waqf for the Mosque.

On 15/1/1982 PIA changed its name again to become the "Fundacion Islamica de Panama" (FIP, Islamic Foundation of Panama). FIP built a large "Mosque Complex" on the corner of Mexico Avenue and East 31st Street in Panama City. This was the first mosque of Panama with a beautiful Islamic architecture. It was named "Jama Masjid" (the Cathedral Mosque). The Jama Masjid with two minarets, includes a large prayer hall which can accommodate 1,000 faithful, classrooms, offices, community facilities, a library and a conference hall. FIP also owns a building as a waqf, whose income covers the expenses of the "Mosque Complex". The building of the "Mosque Complex" and the waqf building were financed by the Muslim Community with a large contribution of Suleiman Bhiku and his family.

The Jama Masjid of Panama City became a center of Islamic activity. Tablighi groups visit it from all over the country. About 150 people are present daily in the mosque. Classes on Islam and Arabic are given regularly in the mosque as well as in another school established near the homes of the Muslims. This education is given free of charge by the Imam, Mawlawi Abdul-Kader. The latter's salary is paid by FIP.

During Ramadhan, the Jama Mosque becomes particularly active, as about 200 faithful are present in the tarawih prayers. Eid-ul-Fitr and

Eid-ul-Adha are occasions for great joy, where all the Muslim Community of Panama City gathers in its Jama Mosque to pray, celebrate, and strengthen their solidarity.

Among other leaders of FIP are Abdurrahman Patel, Ahmed Bhiku, former President, and Yusuf Bhiku, the President in 1994.

2- La Chorrera

Muslims are present in other towns of Panama Province. They organized in La Chorrera where they established a small mosque for daily prayers. Most of the 30 Muslims in this small town on the west side of the Canal of Panama are of Indian origin. Many are ambulant salesmen.

11 – Panama : Islam in the Provinces

Of the nine provinces and one territory of Panama, Islam is present in five provinces: Panama (seen in the last section), Colon, Coclé, Chiriquí and Bocas del Toro. The situation in each one of these provinces will be considered separately in the following.

A) Colon Province

Colon Province is located in the North of the country. It is limited to the North by the Caribbean Sea, straddling the Panama Canal, to the West by Veraguas Province, to the South by the provinces of Coclé and Panama, and to the East by Darién Province. Its capital, Colon, is at 120 km from Panama City on the east side of the entrance of the Canal, in the Free zone. It is the second largest city of Panama, and the only one of Colon Province having an organized Muslim presence.

There are at present about 500 Muslims in Colon, including 350 Sunnis and 150 Shia from Lebanon. The Sunnis include about 100

Panamean converts. The Muslims of Colon originate from the following countries in order of importance of their numbers : Lebanon, Pakistan, Jordan, Syria, India and Pakistan. Most Lebanese came from two towns in the Beqa' Valley, Ba'lul and Al-Qar'un.

The Colon Muslims emigrated first to Micao in Colombia, and then starting 1980 to Colon. Their numbers increased fast after 1986. They are well educated and are aware of the necessity to organize to save their Islamic identity. They are in their majority rich and influential and are part of the upper class society in Colon. They include two leading families : the Sakhrs and the Fafeehs.

Most Muslims work in trade in the Free zone. They control an important portion of the products imported from East Asia (Japan, China, Malaysia and Indonesia) to the Free Zone, then distribute it to most of Latin America.

In 1983, the Muslims of Colon established the "Centro Cultural Islamico de Colon" (CCIC) and a temporary Islamic Center. Later, CCIC received a 35,000 m² piece of land from the Government for the establishment of a Mosque Complex. On May 1987, the posing of its corner stone was celebrated in the presence of the Governor of the Colon Province and the Minister of Education of Panama. In 1992, it was finished at a cost to which contributed the local Muslim Community.

The Colon Mosque Complex includes a beautiful mosque proper capable of accomodating 900 faithfuls at a time, a full-time primary school, a kinder-garden, a meeting hall, offices, a library, a conference hall, a radio station and sports facilities including basket ball and tennis courts.

In the 1984 - 5 academic year, two schools started in the Mosque : the "Arab Islamic School" where Islam and Arabic language are taught along with the regular Panamean program of Education; and the "Arab Panamean Academy" accredited by the State. In 1986 - 7, the three levels of the first totaled 39 students (boys and girls), all

Muslim. The second was made up of a kinder-garden with two levels totaling about 52 children, and a primary school with a total in the three levels of 36 students, the majority non-Muslims. Thus, there was in 1986 - 7 a total of 127 children in the CCIC school system. The "Arab Panamean Academy" was headed by a Panamean lady and had 8 Panamean teachers, all non-Muslims. The Imam was responsible for the teaching of Qur'an, hadith and the basics of Islam. The fees were US 60/month per student in the "Arab Panamean Academy" and US 40/month per student in the "Arab Islamic School".

By 1988, the two schools were fused totaling 180 students. At present, their number is above 300, including a large percentage of non-Muslims. Since May 1987, the school is housed in a modern two-floor building, part of the Mosque Complex.

CCIC hired first an Egyptian Imam, Sheikh Fathi Ibrahim, a graduate of Al-Azhar University, on a contract with housing facilities and yearly visits to Egypt. The Imam is responsible for all religious activities in the Community as well as Islamic and Arabic education in the School system. In April 1987, Sheikh Fathi Farhat was succeeded by Sheikh Burhan Farhat, a Lebanese graduate from the Islamic University in Medinah (Saudi Arabia). He is their Imam until today (1995).

Usually, 30 persons are present in the Friday prayers, and up to 20 in the daily prayers. During Ramadhan, the Mosque becomes more active, and CCIC broadcasts 30 minutes daily emissions on Islam on the National Radio during the whole month. The Imam visits families, gives public adult classes after Friday prayers and daily evening classes. Furthermore, he and his wife teach Arabic and Islam in the Islamic School.

For many years, Ahmed Saker (Sakhr) has been CCIC President. Other CCIC leaders are Fawzi Hashem and Asem Ghouth, among others. The Colon Muslims were visited by many Muslim leaders, such as Sheikh Mohammed Ajaj from the "Center for Islamic Da'wah

in Latin American" (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Sheikh Mohammed Hassan 'Aref, who stayed with them several months in 1987, Sheikh Anwar Abdussalam, Sheikh Ahmed Ali Saifi of Sao Paulo in 1988, and Sheikh Mustafa Abdul-Ghani Ahmed, in 1993, among others.

B) Coclé Province

Coclé Province is limited to the North by Colon Province, to the West by the provinces of Veraguas and Herrera, to the South by the Pacific Ocean, and to the East by Panama Province. Muslims are present and organized in two of its cities : Penonomé and Aguadulce.

1 - Penonomé

Penonomé is the capital of the Coclé Province. It is located at the foothills, on the main road crossing Central America, 130 km to the West of La Chorrera. By 1987, it had a population of about 40 Muslims. At present, their number increased to about 250 Muslims, all Palestinians, belonging to two extended families. They own many shops in town.

In 1987, they were visited by Sheikh Mohammed Hassan 'Aref who urged them to organize as a Muslim Community. In May 1993, they established an "Islamic Association", collected funds and bought land for the purpose of establishing a "Mosque Complex". They are being helped by CCIC. One of the leaders of the Muslims of Penonomé is Ayad Shelebi, the owner of Supermercado El Colmate.

2- Aguadulce

Aguadulce is also located on the Central American Highway in the Western part of Coclé Province. In the 1970's, Muslims started to emigrate to Aguadulce from other parts of Panama. Around 1985, they established an "Islamic Association" and rented a locale they used as a temporary mosque. By 1987, there was around 100 Muslims in Aguadulce, 80 from India and 20 from Palestine. Their Imam was Sheikh Abu-Bakr Yusuf.

In 1987, they bought a piece of land. On 17/7/1987, they put the cornerstone for the "Mosque Complex" which they finished around

1989. At present, there are about 200 Muslims in Aguadulce, mostly of Indian origin. The Aguadulce Mosque has become one of the most active mosques in Panama.

C) Chiriquí Province

Chiriquí Province is limited to the East by Veraguas Province, to the North by the Province of Bocas del Toro, to the West by Costa Rica, and to the South by the Pacific Ocean. Muslims are present and organized in three towns of the Province : David, Concepcion, and Paso Canoas. There are about 600 Muslims in the Province.

1) David

David is the capital of Chiriquí Province. It is the third largest city of Panama, with a population of about 200,000. It is located on the Central American Highway, at about 45 km from the border of Costa Rica.

In the 1980's, Muslim started emigrating to David. By 1987, they were around 40. In 1995, they numbered around 100, mostly originating from the town of Turmus'aya in Palestine. Most are new immigrants, and only a few are from old immigration. Many are married to local Panamean women. They work in trade and are in a good financial situation. They buy ready-made clothes, shoes, and electric appliances from Colon and sell them to Panameans and Costa Ricans in David.

Since the early 1990's, they started to organizing by establishing Islamic prayers and education. First, they rented a locale they used as Islamic Center. They had to leave it after three months, as the owner wanted it back. Then, they rented another locale which they had to leave after six months.

In May 1993, a young man, Mohammed Salameh, called a meeting of the Community where the "Associacion Islamica de David" (AID) was established. Funds were collected and a five-men committee was nominated. Its assignment was to register AID, buy a land and build a Mosque Complex. In June 1993, AID rented a third locale to be used

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In May 1993, a young man, Mohammed Salameh, called a meeting of the Community where the "Asociacion Islamica de David" (AID) was established. Funds were collected and a five-men committee was nominated. Its assignment was to register AID, buy a land and build a Mosque Complex. In June 1993, AID rented a third locale to be used

as a temporary mosque. Later, a land was bought and AID is now establishing its Mosque Complex. Among the leaders of the David Muslim Community are Mohammed Al-Araj, the owner of Almacen Medio Oriente, and Rabeh Mohammed Jebara, the owner of Almacen Zona Libre.

2) Concepcion

Concepcion is located at about 40 km from David and 45 km from the border with Costa Rica. It is the home of about 300 Muslims, most of them from Palestine. They own many shops in the city center. They are very close to the Muslims of David and those of Paso Canoas.

In the 1970's, Muslims started emigrating to Concepcion. In 1986, they rented a room they used as a prayer hall. It was opened only on Fridays, for the congregational prayers. However, Concepcion Muslims received many visitors, such as Tablighi Jamaats and Imams from other communities, such as Sheik Mohammed Hassan 'Aref in October 1987. They all urged them to organize better. By then they were about 100 Muslims. In 1993, they established the "Asociacion Islamica de Concepcion" (AIC) and bought a house they use as Islamic Center. One of their leaders is Abdullah Freij, a Palestinian of Christian Arab origin who converted to Islam in 1985 and became very active in organizing the Muslim Community.

3) Paso Canoas

Paso Canoas is located right on the international border line separating Panama from Costa Rica. Most of its 50 shops are owned by Palestinian Muslims. The President of its Chamber of Commerce, Shukri Mustafa, is one of the leaders of the Muslim Community. Others are the two brothers Muneer and Mohammed 'Odeh, owners of the Almacen Jerusalen de Panama.

In October 1987, Sheikh Mohammed Hassan 'Aref visited Paso Canoas and organized for the first time Eid-ul-Adha (1407 A.H.) prayers in the Chamber of Commerce of the town. Later, Shukri Mustafa made available a room in his house as a temporary mosque.

At present, the Muslims of Paso Canoas plan to build a mosque, but as many of them live in Concepcion, they feel to be part of the Muslim Community of Concepcion.

D) Bocas del Toro Province

The Province of Bocas del Toro is limited to the North by the Caribbean Sea, to the West by Costa Rica, to the South by Chiriqui Province, and to the East by Veraguas Province. Its capital is the town of Bocas del Toro on Colon Island. Muslims are present in one town in this province : Changinola.

Changinola is at 300 km by road from David and 30 minutes by plane. It is the center of production of Bananas, controlled by US companies which export them to the whole world. In the 1980's, about 30 Muslims came this town, all Palestinians related to those of David. They are in a good financial position due to their work in trade.

In 1992, they established the "Asociacion Islamica de Changinola" and rented a locale they used as temporary mosque. When its owner wanted it back, they moved to a temporary mosque in a room in the shop of one of them in Guabito, on the border of Costa Rica, at 20 km from Changinola. They hold regularly Friday congregational prayers.

In May 1993, they held an important meeting where they elected a committee for the purpose of registering their Islamic association and buying a land to build a proper Mosque Complex. They collected in that day some funds. Later, they did buy the land and they are planning to build their Mosque. Among their leaders are the acting Imam, Najeh Mohammed Al-Araj, the owner of Almacen de Nueva Moda, and Badr Jebara, the owner of Almacen Zona Libre.

12 - Conclusions

Organized Muslim presence in Central America is the most recent in the Continent. Although Muslim communities were present in most of the countries of this region since World War I, it was only in the 1980's that the first Islamic associations started to be established. The take off is occurring only in the 1990's. Table 12.1 shows the approximate number of Muslims and Islamic associations in 1994 in Central America.

Table 12.1 : Muslims in Central America in 1994

State	No. of Muslims	Muslims %	No. of Assoc.	Mosque Complexes
Mexico	40,000	0.04	10	1
Guatemala	1,000	0.01	1	-
Honduras	1,000	0.02	2	-
El Salvador	500	0.01	1	-
Nicaragua	500	0.01	2	-
Costa Rica	500	0.02	3	-
Panama	5,500	0.23	9	3
Total	49,000	0.04	28	4

At present, Muslims are organized in all the seven states of Central America. However, their presence is more numerous and more dynamic in Mexico and especially in Panama. With the exception of one Muslim community in Mexico (Torreon) all the Muslim communities which succeeded in building a complete Mosque Complex are located in Panama (Panama City, Colon, Aguadulce).

A measure of growth in the Muslim community is in the evolution of the number of Muslim organizations in the Region in the last fifteen years. In 1980, there was only one single Muslim association in the entire Region, in Panama City, and not a single Mosque Complex. It 1990, the number of Muslim associations reached 8 and that of Mosque complexes 2 (Panama City and Aguadulce). Four years later, these numbers rose respectively to 26 and 4. It is expected that they

would reach in the year 2000 around 100 Muslim associations and 15 Mosque complexes. Thus, we are witnessing the birth of a dynamic Muslim Community in Central America.

The growth of the Muslim Community is due to three major elements, the most important is the return to Islam of descendants of old immigration; the second is the conversion to Islam of persons who are not of Muslim origin. The third is new immigration, which is numerically small but has an important effect on the two others.

The centers of influence on Islam in Central America are numerous. The most important is the United States where many citizens of Central America discover Islam, especially Mexicans. The second is Brazil with its well organized and thriving Muslim Community. The third is Spain where many visitors from Central America discover Islam and its civilization in Andalucia. And the fourth is nearby Colombia whose Muslims have close relations with many Muslims in Panama and other Central American states.

As elsewhere in the American Continent, those touched first by Islamic renaissance are the East Indians, followed by the Lebanese, then the Palestinians. Reverts (converts) are having increasing influence and are expected to have even more in the future, especially in Mexico.

The Muslims of Central America are in close contact with those of the United states, on the one hand, and those of the rest of Latin America, especially Colombia and Brazil on the other. The different Muslim Organizations are still in their first stages of formation, with the exception of the four that established already their full institutions (Torreon, Panama City, Colon, Aguadulce). Therefore, the formation of National bodies for each state did not occur yet, but they will be established soon in both Panama and Mexico. Panama is certainly setting the pace in that direction.

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CHAPTER X Islam in the Andean States

by

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- 1 - Introduction
- 2 - Venezuela : Formation of the Muslim Community
- 3 - Venezuela : Islam in Caracas
- 4 - Venezuela : Islam in the Provinces
- 5 - Colombia : Formation of the Muslim Community
- 6 - Colombia : Islam in Bogota
- 7 - Colombia : Islam in the Provinces
- 8 - Islam in Peru
- 9 - Islam in Ecuador
- 10 - Islam in Chile
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- 12 - Conclusions References.

1- Introduction

The Andean Region is made up of the six states that share the Andean Chain of mountains in South America. These are, from North to South: Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chili. This region speaks today Spanish. It covers a total land area of 5,462,375 km², and extends from the Caribbean in the North to the Tierra del Fuego in the South.

The story of Islam in the Andean States started certainly before the conquest of the area by Spain, especially in its northern part. The Spanish conquerors brought later with them some transfuges of the vanquished Muslim Andalucian Nation. Thousands of the persecuted the so-called Moriscos fled to the new colonies to escape the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition back home. However, this Inquisition followed them to the New World as many Muslims in the 16th Century were burned on the stake for their Muslim faith.

As soon as this European wave of Muslim presence died out, leaving only traces in the literature, arts and culture of the people, a new wave started from Africa. These were enslaved Africans brought

in by the Spanish conquistadors to Venezuela and Colombia, in the 17th and 18th centuries. They tried to keep their Islamic faith by all means, but the harsh conditions of slavery made any Islamic survival among them impossible. By the 19th Century, Islam remained only a memory in the Black population of both Venezuela and Colombia.

By the end of the 19th Century a third wave of Muslim immigration started from Asia, mostly from Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. It continues to this day.

The older Arab immigration started during the Ottoman Period. It came mostly from what is today Syria and lasted until World War I. Afterwards, most immigrants came from Lebanon until World War II. Thereafter, the majority of the immigrants came from Palestine. The problems in Palestine since 1948, and in Lebanon since the 1970's, led to a continuous trickle of Muslim immigrant from both countries to the Andean Region.

The old Arab immigration was made up primarily by single men who were a tiny minority within the Christian Arab emigration. At that time, the conditions of the Andean States, completely controlled by the Catholic Church, were such no Muslim presence was tolerated. Under different pressures, and through mixed marriages, most of the descendants of the first emigration are practically lost to Islam.

More recent Muslim immigration from Greater Syria is made up by families who are more knowledgeable about Islam, arriving from countries where they felt aggressed in their own identity. The circumstances in the Andean Region improved, and Islam became perfectly accepted as the oppression of the Catholic Church over other beliefs decreased greatly.

This led to an Islamic revival which started to be felt in the 1980's and is still in its beginnings. This revival touched the different elements of the Muslim and non-Muslim population at different times. The first to be touched by it are the Lebanese which started Islamic institutions in the early 1980's. They were followed by the Palestinians

in the 1990's. The Syrians are the last to come back, and still at an individual level. Mass return to Islam of Syrians of Muslims origin is to be expected by the end of this decade.

Among the non-Muslims, those of African origin were first to revert to Islam, establishing a community in Colombia. They were influenced mostly by the Black Muslim movement in the USA. They are followed closely in their interest in Islam by the American Indians. Indeed, in the 1990's, many natives of the Andean States started converting to Islam in their own countries and in the USA, Canada and Spain. It is expected that by the end of this decade they will start forming Muslim communities. Finally, citizens of both Arab Christian and Spanish origin are now converting to Islam as individuals. More are expected to do so in the future.

This author is in close contact with the Muslim communities of the Andean Region through correspondence and personally. Most of the information reported in this paper is first-hand. This author also visited this Region three times, bringing him to five of the six states under consideration : Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile and Bolivia.

The first visit, in the period 8/12/1973 to 5/1/1974, was on a fact-finding tour for the Muslim World League (Mecca, Saudi Arabia) to the Muslims of the American Continent. The author visited then Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Colombia during this period. He met with the leaders of the Muslim communities and urged them to organize themselves in Muslim associations and establish Islamic institutions. Of the five Andean countries visited, only Chile and Venezuela had an Islamic organization, one each.

The second visit took part in August 1985 within a program of energy studies that took this author to Bogota and Manizales in Colombia. He was able to see then the progress of the Muslim Community of Bogota.

The third visit, on 16-18/8/1987, was to Caracas (Venezuela). It was part of a tour to South America for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia). During this visit, the author, met with the leaders of the Muslim communities of Caracas, Santa Margarita, and Valencia. He also followed up with the project of the Mosque of Caracas. The author met with the then Venezuelan Minister of foreign affairs, Alberto Consalvi, and with the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan, Algeria and Indonesia. He met also with the leaders of the Palestinian community.

The six Andean States could be divided into two categories as far as Islam is concerned.

The first group is made of Venezuela and Colombia where the number of Muslims is relatively large and Islamic organization is taking a good start as Muslims are organized not only in the capital cities but in the provinces as well. The stage of organization is not limited to establishment of mosques, but to the starting of full-time Islamic schools. More than 90% of the Muslims of the Andean countries live in these two states.

Table 1.1 : Visits of Dr. Ali Kettani to the Muslim Communities of the Andean Countries

Date	8/12/73 – 5/1/74	24-30/8/85	16-18/8/87
Venezuela	8-10/12/73	X	16-18/8/87
Colombia	4-5/1/74	24-30/8/85	X
Peru	2-4/1/74	X	X
Bolivia	1-2/1/74	X	X
Chile	31/12/73-1/1/74	X	X

Table 1.2 : Islam in the Andean States in 1991

Country	area in Km2	Total Population	Muslim Population	Muslim Percentage	Capital
Venezuela	912,050	20,420,000	60,000	0,3	Caracas
Colombia	1,138,914	34,000,000	30,000	0,00	Bogota
Peru	1,285,215	22,200,000	3,000	0,01	Lima
Ecuador	270,670	9,900,000	2,000	0,02	Quito
Chile	756,945	13,700,000	2,000	0,01	Santiago
Bolivia	1,098,581	7,000,000	1,000	0,01	La Paz
Total	5,462,375	107,220,000	98,000	0,09	

The second category is made up by the other four countries: Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile. In these countries the number of Muslims is small, Islamic organizations are limited to only one or two in the capital cities, and Islamic institutions are almost inexistent.

Table 1.2 gives a summary of the Muslim presence in the Andean states. It shows that they numbered less than 100,000 in the entire Region, constituting about one person per thousand in a total population of 107,220,000 people. This is indeed one of the smallest densities of Muslims in the World. Nevertheless, a period of growth is dawning in this important region of the Americas.

2 - Venezuela : The Formation of the Muslim community

Venezuela is located in the North-East of South America. It has an area of 912,050 km² and had a population of 20,420,000 in 1991 and 5,143,000 in 1951. This fast expanding population doubles every 20 years. The country is limited to the North by the Caribbean Sea, to the West by Colombia, to the South by Brazil and to the East by Guyana. It is divided in four geographical regions : the plains of Maracaibo in the West ; mountains in the North and North-West, with the highest peak at 5,007 meters above sea level ; the basin of the Orinoco River

in the South and the South-East ; and the hills of Guyana to the East. The climate is tropical in the plains and mild in the mountains.

Venezuela is a republic, its capital is Caracas, and its language is Spanish. It is divided in 21 provinces and 2 national territories. The most important cities are Caracas (4 million people); Maracaibo (1.3 million) ; Valencia (1.2 million) ; Maracay (890,000) ; and Barquisimeto (740,000). About 20% of Venezuelans are of European origin, mainly Spanish, 68% are mestizos, mixed-blood between West-Indian natives and Europeans, 10% are pure blood West Indians, and 2% are of African origin. Most Venezuelans are Catholic, but there are several hundred thousands protestants.

Colombus landed in Venezuela in 1498 near the lake of Maracaibo. As he saw the natives living in houses on stilts in the lake, he named the country "little Venize", "Venezuela" in Spanish. Spain took over the country which remained its colony until the Revolution led by Simon Bolivar in 1812. In 1821, the exit of the Revolution led to the independence of Greater Colombia, of which Venezuela was a part. In 1830, Venezuela separated from Greater Colombia as an independent republic and remained so since then.

Venezuela was one of the poorest countries of South America, with an economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry, producing maize, rice, coffee, cacao, bananas, and sugar cane. But the discovery of oil made Venezuela for a while prosperous until the fall in oil prices brought in its own problems. Venezuela produces also many minerals such as iron and bauxite on which it bases its industry. It also produces cars, food products and textiles.

Andalucian Muslims entered Venezuela with the Spanish as they did elsewhere in Latin America. They were lost as Muslims, but their presence remained in the culture of the country, especially in its literature, such as the work of the writer Rafael Dongales y Mendez (born in 1878) who declared with pride his Islamic and Andalucian origin.

The present Muslim Community could be traced to immigration of Arab Muslims from Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine) which started in the second half of the 19th Century and is still continuing. However, most of them were Christian. Some among these were outstanding authors in the Arabic language, such as the poet Georges Saidah.

The Palestinian thinker, Akram Zu'ayter, visited Venezuela on January 26 to February 3, 1948, in a tour to the Arabic communities of Latin America to organize them in their support for the Palestinian cause. Zu'ayter found that the greatest majority of the Arabs of Venezuela were from Greater Syria and Christian. He estimated their number around 5,000, mostly from Lebanon.

There was no Islamic association in 1948 in Venezuela, but several cultural or national organizations bringing together Arabs of all faiths. Those mentioned by Zu'ayter were : "The National Salvation Committee" ; "The Lebanese-Syrian Club" ; "The Social Arab Club" ; "The Association of Arab Brotherhood" ; and "The Lebanese Club".

The first two organizations were established in Caracas. The third, "The Social Arab Club", was established in Maracaibo. The fourth, "The Association of Arab Brotherhood", was founded in El Tigre by Farik Maaruf, a Druze like most of its members. It also established branches in Maturin and Barcelona. The fifth, "The Lebanese Club" was established in Barquisimeto.

Thus, in 1948, there were Arab associations in five Venezuelan provinces : the Federal District (Caracas) ; Monagas (Maturin) ; Anzoategui (Barcelona, El Tigre) ; Lara (Barquisimeto) ; and Zulia (Maracaibo). There was no Islamic associations, nor any Islamic institution.

However, it seems that the estimate of 5,000 Arabs in 1948 is rather on the lower side. Nevertheless, later, more emigrants moved to Venezuela from Syria, Lebanon and especially from Palestine.

Moreover, more Muslims emigrated to Venezuela from Trinidad and Guyana.

By 1971, the total number of Muslims in Venezuela could be estimated at 30,000. In 1991, it must be around 60,000, as estimated from figures given by the Muslim Community. This represents about 0,3% of the total population. Of this total, about 20,000 Muslims are of Lebanese origin, 20,000 Syrians, 15,000, Palestinians, and the remaining 5,000 Muslims of various other origins, mainly Trinidadians and Guyanese.

Most of the Lebanese and Syrians are descendants of old emigration. Those present now are Venezuelan born and in a very advanced state of de-Islamization. The Palestinians, Trinidadians and Guyanese are of more recent immigration and are becoming the pillars of Muslim organization in Venezuela.

There are about 20,000 Muslims in Caracas and its suburbs. Most of the rest live in the provinces of Falcon, Nueva Sparta, Zulia, Aragua, Anzoatogui, Monigas and Bolivar. Most Muslims of Venezuela are middle class. However, many are poor, or ambulant tradesmen moving between villages and cities to sell their petty products. The Muslims of Venezuela, especially the old immigration, are not very well organized.

3 – Venezuela : Islam in Caracas

Caracas is the largest city of Venezuela, its capital and its Federal District. It lies at 922 meters above sea level. In 1555, a ranch was established in the location by Francisco Fajardo, the son of a Spanish captain and an Amerindian chief daughter. In 1561, Juan Rodriguez founded a town on the site of the ranch, which was soon destroyed by Amerindian attackers. In 1567, it was rebuilt by Diego de Losada, who is credited today for founding it. He named the town Santiago de Leon de Caracas, in honor of Santiago (Saint James) ; Leon (Don

Pedro Ponce de Leon, the Provincial Governor) ; and Caracas (the local Indian tribe), a name reduced later to Caracas. In 1577, Caracas became a provincial capital. In 1595, the city was attacked by English pirates. In 1755 and 1812, it was destroyed by earthquakes. In 1830, at independence, Caracas became capital of the Venezuelan Republic.

In 1771, the population of Caracas reached 18,500. In 1800, the figure became 40,000. The city started to grow in a faster rate only at the end of the 19th Century, and especially after 1930 and the beginning of oil exploitation. In 1955, the population of Metropitition Caracas reached 1,000,000. In the census of 1971, it reached 2,200,000. In 1991, this population was around 4 millions, making it one of the metropolises of South America.

Caracas is also the seat of the Central University of Venezuela, established in 1721, and four other universities : Simon Bolivar, Andres Bello Catholic, Metropolitan, Santa Maria, and a multitude of institutes of higher education,

When Akram Zu'ayter visited Caracas on 26/1-3/2/1948, he found no Islamic association in Caracas. Instead, there were two Arab secular associations : the "National Salvation Committee" and the "Lebanese-Syrian Club". The first was established after the bombardment of Damascus by the French Army at the end of World War II. It collected funds for building schools in Syria and Lebanon, and expended later to building homes for the poor in Venezuela. The second was established by second generation young Venezuelans of Lebanese and Syrian parents, but expanded to bringing in other Venezuelans. It developed into an Arab Club in the Venezuelan capital. In 1948, its president was Ali Ilya, a Muslim Venezuelan by birth; among the members was Aziz Moussa Ibrabim, the owner of the Magazine "Oriente".

On 1/2/1948, Akram Zu'ayter established in Caracas a "Central Committee for the Defense of Palestine in Venezuela" made up by leaders of the Arab Community of all faiths and origins, in a meeting

in the "Syrian-Lebanese Club". The Maronite Patriarch, Badawi Abou-Lahoud, was chosen as Honorary President of the "Committee", and Abdullah Hulwa, a businessman, as President. Eventually, this "Committee" developed later in an "Arab Palestinian Club" which is still existing. In 1973, its President was Izzet Dib. In 1987, he was Mohi Hassan Jalal.

There are in Caracas also several Arab magazines, the most known being "The Venezuela Arab Union" and "the Voice of Palestine", published in Spanish. In 1973, the editor of the latter was Mohammed Issa.

By the time Akram Zu'ayter visited Caracas in 1948, its Muslim population must have been around 1,000, a minority in the much larger Arab Christian population. In 1994, the Muslim population of Caracas may be estimated at about 20,000 Muslims, or about the third of the Muslims of Venezuela and 0.5% of the total population of the city.

Caracas is the seat of the first Muslim organization established in Venezuela. In 1967, a group of Muslims of Lebanese origin met together and formed "El Centro Islamico de Venezuela" (CIV) with the "Executive Committee for the Construction of the Venezuela Mosque in Caracas". This association was registered officially in January 1968. CIV tried first to obtain land from the Government for the construction of the mosque and sent an official request on 3/9/1970, signed by its President Jawdat Ibrahim Hammoud. When the request was rejected, CIV raised funds and bought a large house in the suburb of El Paraiso, contributed to by more than 200 members of the Community.

The house was converted into an Islamic Center. On 28/12/1972, it was opened officially in the presence of officials and the ambassadors of Muslim countries. It has an area of 525 m² and is made up of two floors. The ground floor was converted into a mosque and the first floor was used as a school (3 rooms), a library, a conference room and

an office. This author visited CIV and its center on 8-10/9/1973, its President was Mohammed-Yusuf Abdul-Hadi (of Lebanese origin). In 1982, CIV President was Hassan Fadl Al-Majzub, in 1983, he was Ibrahim Khalil Hammoud, and in 1987, the President was Mohammed Dib Ali, all Lebanese.

The Friday and daily five congregational prayers are held regularly in the CIV Center. The Friday prayers are usually attended by more than one hundred Muslims. CIV hold monthly seminars on specific Islamic subjects. They requested a paid Imam from Egypt and Libya, but it was the Muslim World League of Saudi Arabia which send Imams, such as Sheikh Mustapha Al-Hamshari (1980-1988), from Egypt. He was followed by another Egyptian Imam, then a Moroccan, then an Egyptian. CIV produces also a monthly magazine in Spanish called "Islam".

CIV bought in 1977 another house adjacent to the first one and converted it into a full-time Primary Muslim School (PMS). It had in 1993-1994 about 300 students. PMS also gives daily Islamic education to Muslim children in public schools, after school hours and on week-ends. PMS owns three buses for the transport of students. CIV was also able to establish a Muslim cemetery.

By 1986, the Muslim Community was granted by the Government a 5,000 m² piece of land well situated in the center of Caracas in front of the Hilton Hotel. A Saudi benefactor, Sheikh Ibrahim Ibrahim, offered to built the entire mosque and an Islamic center. It is an outstanding building fit for the capital of Venezuela. It includes a mosque, an Islamic school, conference halls, social halls, offices and dwellings of the Imam. This mosque is under a separate Executive Committee including Shaikh Bakr Khumais, the former ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Venezuela, the designate of the current Saudi ambassador, the representative of CIV, and a nominee of the Ibrahim Ibrahim Foundation.

While the situation is much better than it was before, it seems that the Muslim community of Caracas is not able yet to set up the right pace of an overall organization of the Muslims of Venezuela. Nevertheless the progress is obvious.

4 – Venezuela : Islam in the Provinces

An Islamic revival is going on in Venezuela, reversing the continuous loss of new Muslim generations, and even recuperating back some lost Muslims. However, there are still thousands of descendants of Muslims who do not identify any more with Islam, and more thousands Muslims are not organized. Venezuelan Muslims were often victims of discrimination. In 1987, Venezuela even took a decision to stop further Arab immigration, which seems to be implemented only against Arab Muslims.

By 1994, Venezuelan Muslims have been organized in eleven cities and towns in nine different provinces, including Caracas (Federal District). These are Santa Margarita (Nueva Esparta) ; Valencia (Carabobo) ; Maracaibo (Zulia) ; El Tigre (Anzoategui) ; Moron (Carabobo) ; Puerto Cabello (Carabobo) ; Maracay (Aragua) ; San Felipe (Yaracuy) ; El Coro (Falcon) ; and San Felix (Bolivar). It is interesting to note that the geographical distribution of this Islamic organization is different from the distribution of the Arabic organization noticed by Akram Zu'ayter in 1948. The new concentration is mostly in the North-Central regions of Venezuela, whereas the old one was mostly in the Eastern regions.

Santa Margarita (Nueva Esparta)

Santa Margarita is a free zone island in the Caribbean, off the Venezuela coast, forming with the adjacent islands the province of Nueva Esparta. It has a population of about 300,000 people of which 5,000 are Muslims mostly of Lebanese origin, working in trade. About 60% of the Muslims are Sunni, and 40% Shia. There are also Alawites and Druzes.

In 1982, the Muslims of Santa Margarita organized in a "Muslim Community of Santa Margarita" (CMSM), a branch of CIV. The CMSM President in 1989 was Mahmud Abu Nasif, a businessman of Porlamar, the main town of the island, of Lebanese origin. In 1983, the President was Fayer Sakhr, a Lebanese.

With funds contributed by about 60 Muslim families originating from one single Lebanese village a mosque was built in Porlamar. It is a large prayer hall which can accomodate about 200 faithful. It has no facilities for other activities. The five daily prayers are held, and usually about 100 Muslims are present in the Friday prayers.

CMSM has an Imam from Egypt, Sheikh Ahmed El-Sayed Issa, 70% of whose salary is paid by the Muslim World League of Saudi Arabia, the rest by CMSM. Classes are held on the basis of two hours per session in Arabic and Islamic studies. Three sessions are conducted weekly, one for men, one for women and one for children.

By 1988, a full-time Primary Islamic School was started but it had problems with the authorities as the facilities were found inadequate. The Muslim Community put down a down payment to build an appropriate school near the Islamic Center.

CMSM established also the "Arab Club" in a 4,000 m² property. The ground is flood-lighted and has excellent recreational facilities for swimming, basketball, tennis and other indoor and outdoor Islamically-accepted games. It has a small restaurant and is used for Islamic youth camps.

There is in Santa Margarita also a Shiite Imam for the Shiite Muslim Community which started to organize separately, CMSM being made up mostly by Sunni Muslims.

Valencia (Carabobo)

Valencia, capital of the Province of Carabobo, is the third city of Venezuela. It has a population of about 4,000 Muslims, mostly of Palestinian origin. First, they established an "Arab Palestinian Club". Then, they bought a 66,000 m² piece of land. In 1986, they

established an ICV branch and build a 300 m² Mosque, Al-Quds Al-Shareef Mosque, which can accomodate over 300 faithful. It has adequate facilities for classrooms, offices, washrooms, etc..., but it has no minaret or dome. They plan to build a full-time Islamic School and a social club for the entire Muslim Community. In 1987, the president of the Valencia CIJ branch was Abdul-Hamid Yusuf.

The daily prayers are held in the mosque and about 50 people attend Friday prayers. However, few other activities are held, and Arabic and Islamic classes for children are irregular. The Muslim Community received an Imam from Egypt paid by a Saudi benefactor, but he left and was replaced by local volunteers acting as Imams. One of the active members of the community is Samir Hussein, a Palestinian professor of linguistics at the University.

Maracaibo (Zulia)

This is the second largest city of Venezuela on the Western coast. It had "The Social Arab Club" established by Hanna Salim Al-Khoury. In 1948, during the visit of Akram Zu'ayter, the President of this Club was Yusuf Assaf. Most of the members of this Club were Druze.

At present, there are several thousand Muslims in Maracaibo who are mostly Lebanese. There are among them some Egyptians and Syrians. In the 1990's, they established the "Islamic Society of Maracaibo" and started building a Mosque Complex. The Mosque was inaugurated in 1994. The President of the Community is Said Hanafi (of Syrian origin), the owner of Zuldrim Furniture Store. The Hanafi family is indeed very prominent in Maracaibo.

El Tigre (Anzoatequi)

This city of the province of Anzoatequi was the headquarters of the "Association of Arab Brotherhood" founded by Farih Ma'ruf, a Druze like most of its members. At present, there are several hundred Muslims in El Tigre, mostly originating from Guyana. They organized themselves and are building their mosque.

Maracay (Aragua)

Maracay, the capital of the province of Aragua, is the fourth largest city of Venezuela. It is on the road between Valencia and Caracas. There are about 1,000 Muslims in this city. They organized themselves by the late 1980's. They are planning to build a mosque. Meanwhile they have rented facilities where Friday prayers are held regularly.

Puerto Cabello (Carabobo)

Puerto Cabello is the port of the province of Carabobo on the Caribbean Sea. It has a Muslim community of different Arab origins. It organized itself in 1989. It has yet no mosque nor Islamic Center.

Moron (Carabobo)

Moron is a small town of the province of Carabobo at about 50 km to the west of Puerto Cabello. It has a population of several hundred Muslims of Arab origin. They organized themselves in 1990, but they have yet no mosque nor Islamic Center.

San Felipe (Yaracuy)

San Felipe is the capital of the province of Yaracuy, to the West of Valencia. It has several thousands Muslims. In 1987, they established an Islamic association. Later, they bought a piece of land on which they are building the first Mosque of the city.

El Coro (Falcon)

El Coro is the capital of the province of Falcon, in Western Venezuela, at the entrance of the Paraguana Peninsula, facing the Caribbean Dutch island of Curacao. It had an old Muslim community, mostly of African origin, which was practically lost. Some Muslim du'at from New York City (USA) visited them regularly in the late 1980's and brought many Africans back to Islam. Recently, they organized themselves in a Muslim Community.

San Felix (Bolivar)

San Felix is a town on the Orinoco River, to the North of the province of Bolivar. It became the center of attraction of Muslim immigration from neighboring Guyana. Now, it has about one thousand Muslims. In the late 1980's, they organized themselves within a Muslim Community. They first rented facilities where Friday prayers are held regularly.

In 1984, they started building their Mosque Complex which was completed in 1990. It includes the Mosque proper, an Islamic school, halls, offices, etc... Most members of the Muslim Community are Guyanese, but there are also Trinidadians and a few Arabs. The Imam and leader of the Community is Salim Khan (a Guyanese), who is a construction worker. The Five daily prayers are held regularly. About 100 faithful are present in the Friday prayers and 25 children follow Islamic classes.

Other Communities

There are Muslim communities in several other cities and towns of Venezuela who are descendants of the old migration from Greater Syria. Some of them are in the process of being organized.

Barquisimeto (Lara)

This is the fifth largest city of Venezuela. It had a "Lebanese Club", established by Yusuf Bu-Hanna, a Lebanese Christian. In 1948, it was headed by Anton Bu-Hanna. At present, the city has several hundred Muslims who are not yet organized.

Martin (Managuas)

This city of the province of Managuas had a population of 260,000 in 1991. It has a branch of the "Association of Arab Brotherhood", headed in 1948 by Dib Musa, a Palestinian Muslim. At present, its several hundred Muslims are not yet Islamically organized.

Barcelona (Anzoategui)

This city of the province of Anzoategui had a population of 260,000 people in 1991. It had also a branch of the "Association of

"Arab Brotherhood" headed in 1948 by Yusuf Rizk. At present, it has several hundred Muslims but no Muslim organization or institution yet.

Conclusions

The Muslim Community of Venezuela is in a state of rebirth. Muslim groups are being organized continually all across the country.

5 – Colombia : The formation of the Muslim Community

Colombia is located in the North-West of the South American continent. It has an area of 1,138,914 km² and had a population of 34,000,000 people in 1991, and 11,498,000 in 1951, thus tripling in 40 years. The country is limited to the North by the Caribbean Sea, to the West by Panama and the Pacific Ocean ; to the South by Ecuador and Peru ; and to the East by Venezuela and Brazil. It is divided geographically in two main areas : the western half is made up by three parallel chains of mountains running from North to South, with the highest peak reaching 5,875 meters above sea level ; the eastern half being made up by the plains of the Amazone. Most of the people live in the mountainous region. The climate is tropical in the lowlands and mild in the heights.

Colombia is a Republic ; its capital is Bogota located at 2,640 meters above sea level ; its language is Spanish but many local languages are spoken. It is made up of 23 departments and 8 national territories. The most important cities are Bogota (4 million people), Medellin (1.42 million), Cali (1.4 million), Barranquilla (900,000) and Cartagena (500,000). The population is mixed as about 20% are of European origin (mostly Spanish) ; 68% are mestizos, about 7% are west-Indians and 5% are of African origin. Most of the people are Catholic, several hundred thousands are new Protestant.

Colombia's economy is based on agriculture and mineral products. It is one of the largest producers of coffee, rice and tobacco in the world, as well as precious stones, gold, silver copper, lead, mercury and manganese. It is also a producer of oil. The production of cocaine is becoming a problem of international dimensions.

In 1509, Spain started conquering the land which is now Colombia. In 1564, it named it New Granada, including Colombia and Panama. In 1718, New Granada became the seat of a Viceroy of Spain. In 1810, the Spanish settlers under the leadership of Simon Bolivar rose against Spain. After his victory, Bolivar formed a large independent state enclosing today's Panama, Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador. When Venezuela and Ecuador left the state as independent units, the remaining was called "The Republic of New Granada" then "The Granadine Union" in 1856. In 1861, the name was changed again to become "The United States of Colombia". In 1886, it became "The Republic of Colombia". In 1903, Panama seceded with the help of the USA, a fact recognized by Colombia in 1921.

As elsewhere in Latin America, the first Muslim presence in Colombia was Andalucian. It left only traces in the interest of Colombians in Islamic culture and their attraction to it. The other particular aspect of Colombia is the widespread use of Arab first names for both boys and girls.

In the 19th Century, several Colombian Arabists and Islamists became famous. Among them is Don Azakiel Auricochoa and Don Robino Jose Cuervo. These authors and others, not only attacked the preeminence of the Catholic Church in the country, they went even to the extend of praising Islam and its civilization. Some of them learnt Arabic language and literature.

Nevertheless, the main present Muslim Community is the result of immigration from Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan) since around 1850. This migration could be divided into three waves : the old wave, the recent wave, and the present wave.

The oldest wave was mainly Christian Arab. The few Muslims among them came from villages in Syria and Lebanon (then part of the Ottoman Empire). They were illiterate, and their Islamic knowledge was low. They came as single men and intermarried with Colombian non-Muslim women. Given the pre-eminence of the Catholic Church at that time, most of their descendants were completely lost to Islam.

The second wave reached Colombia from Syria and Lebanon between the two World Wars. The percentage of Muslims in this wave was much higher than in the first, and their knowledge of Islam was better. However, they were imbued with secular Arab nationalism, and they failed to organize as a Muslim Community.

It is the community resulting from this second wave that was visited by Akram Zu'ayter in the period 5-26/1/1948. The outstanding members of the local Arab community were mainly Christian. Among them was the Turbay family, among them Gabriel (1901-1946) was minister in several Venezuelan governments and an Acting President, and Julio Cesar headed the Colombian Parliament during Zu'ayter's visit. Among these Arab Christians in Colombia was Olga Chems, the poetess, and many men of finance, industry and trade. Among the known Muslims were Yusef Yabroudi and Tawfik Barbur in Cartagena, Ali Nasr in Barranquilla, Mohammed Jaja in Cali, etc...

During his visit, Akram Zu'ayter found no Islamic organizations or institutions in Colombia, and only one Arab national organization that included Arabs of all faiths : "The Colombian Arab Youth" in Barranquilla, then headed by Simon Saad.

The descendants of this wave are in an advanced state of assimilation as most of their mothers are Christian Colombians. They usually marry in the Catholic Church, celebrate Christian holidays and eventually baptize their children. Nevertheless, many of them still identify as Muslims.

The third wave is mostly Palestinian, but also Lebanese. It started around 1960, but accelerated in the 1970's and it is still going on today. This wave brought a number of Muslims with higher Islamic knowledge and commitment. It is this new wave that created a revival of the Muslim Community in the 1980's. In fact, one can say that the Muslim Community of Colombia was born in the 1980's, as it was then only that the first Islamic institutions and organizations were established.

Since the late 1970's new convert Muslim communities started springing up, especially among Colombians of African origin. Once more Islam came to them from the USA.

It is very difficult to assess the number of Muslims in Colombia. Those who came in the third wave are certainly Muslims. Those descendants of the older wave are mixed between those who already left Islam to the full Muslims. Indeed, sometimes it is hard to decide who is Muslim and who is not due to their advanced level of assimilation in the Christian community. Nevertheless, one can estimate the number of the Muslims of the new wave at about 9,000. Those remaining Muslims from the older waves may be around 20,000 and the revert are about 1,000. In 1991, the total number of Muslims in Colombia was around 30,000, or about 0.1% of the total population.

About 50% of the Muslims of Colombia are of Palestinian origin, 40% Lebanese, 7% Syrian and 3% revert including Afro-Colombians. Most of the Palestinians are new arrivals, whereas most Syrians are descendants of older migrations. Muslims are dispersed all over the country, with higher concentrations in the North-East, near the border with Venezuela, as well as in the larger cities such as Bogota, Barranquilla and Cali.

Because of the overwhelming hegemony of the Catholic Church in Colombia in the past, Muslims were subjected to a continuous pressure of Christianization, especially children at school. These were

forced to take part in Christian catechism and were sometimes baptized without the consent of their parents. Furthermore, mixed marriages were widespread with non-Muslims. Often the children of such marriages were lost to Islam. At present violence and free sex are problems faced by Muslims in Colombia in their struggle for survival.

Most Muslim migrants started their life in Colombia in trade, and many are still businessmen. Among those who are born in Colombia, many rose in the professional field and industry. In general, Colombian Muslims are working class people.

6 – Colombia : Islam in Bogota

Bogota is the largest city of Colombia, its capital and the capital of the Department of Cundinamarca. It is surrounded by mountains and lies at 2,640 meters above sea level.

In 1536, Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, a Spanish lawyer and writer, originally from the Spanish town of Santa Fe established by the Catholic Kings during their siege of Granada in 1491, set out from Santa Marta on the Caribbean Sea with more than 900 men, with the intention of exploring the sources of the Rio Magdalena. In 1538, they approached Bacata, the seat of the Chibcha Indians. They butchered the Indians, burned their temples and took their gold. A Spanish town was established on the ruins and named Santa Fe de Bacata, later corrupted into Bogota.

In 1564, Bogota became the capital of Nueva Granada. In 1819, when the colony separated from Spain, Bogota became capital of Gran Colombia. It remained the capital of Colombia when that federation broke up in 1830. Bogota's population grew from humble beginnings in the 19th Century to reach 600,000 people in 1951 and 2,540,000 in 1971. In 1991, its population reached four millions.

When Akram Zu'ayter visited Bogota on 8-16/1/1948, he found no Islamic or Arab organization of any type in the city, in spite of the

presence of a large and diversified Arab community, both Christian and Muslim, originating from Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. In fact, most Palestinians of Bogota were Muslims from Jerusalem, such as Ali Rimawi and Ismael Mustafa, or from Nablus, such as Moussa Al-Badawi, Dawud Jamus, Afen Mustafa and Tewfik Abdul-Jabbar.

On 13/1/1948, Akram Zu'yater established the first ever Arab organization in Bogota called "the Committee of the Defense of Palestine in Bogota". Its president was George Helou, a Lebanese Maronite. Among its members were the Muslims Ali Rimawi and Ismael Mustafa. It is not clear what happened later to this Committee, as in the 1950's no trace of any Arab or Islamic organization were to be noticed.

Actually, Muslim immigration to Bogota, started after World War I. The number of Muslims in the city was around 200 when Akram Zu'yater visited them in 1948. They would be around 2,000 in 1991. Today, most Bogota Muslims are of Palestinian origin, and only a small minority is Lebanese. Some of the Muslim descendants of the first waves of migration became prominent in Colombia, such as Raul Mustafa, a Senator, Jamil Ahmed, the Director of the largest Radio station of Colombia and a famous journalist, and many others.

Most Bogota Muslims are lower middle class people with a large number of them still struggling in the trade business. Some are frankly under the poverty line. On the other hand, some Muslims are rich and form the basis of support to the nascent Islamic institutions. Most Muslims speak Spanish as their first language, and Arabic is spoken only by the first generation of migrants. Muslims are also highly influenced by Christian customs, such as the celebration of Christmas and the New Year.

The first organization grouping a majority of Muslims was not even an Islamic one. In 1964, an "Arab Palestinian Club" was established. They rented a large apartment, contributed to by about 40 persons. This Club was useless in bringing cohesion to the

Community. It offered neither Arabic classes nor Islamic services. When this author visited Bogota on 4-5/1/1974, he met with a large number of the Muslims in this Club which was then headed by Said Al-Hajj Said, a Muslim. It was Eid-ul-Adha and the Muslim festival was celebrated with flowing wine. This author discussed with the Muslim Community their needs and urged them to form an Islamic Society and established Islamic institutions.

By the end of the 1970's, the Egyptian Ambassador in Bogota, Mohammed Hafez Al-Qanbashawi, kept a room in his own embassy as a mosque for his staff and whoever cared to pray in it from outside.

Around 1979, a then 42 year old Muslim industrialist of Palestinian origin, Ibrahim Ali Salim, opened a prayer-room and an Arab School in his firm. Few took advantage of these facilities.

In 1982, Ibrahim Ali Salem, decided to establish a mosque on the fourth floor of a building he owns. He then started urging the Muslims of Bogota to come to "his" mosque to pray and to organize as Muslims. In the beginning, his calls fell on deaf ears. The Egyptian Ambassador mentioned above supported him with a small help from the Ministry of Awqaf of Egypt to reorganize the floor as a comfortable Islamic Center and Mosque. While a small group of Muslims started to join the mosque, the burden of all expenses

By the end of January 1987, a crime occurred that shook the Muslim Community of Bogota out of its sleep. In 1959, Abdurrahman Abdullah Al-Khatib emigrated from Palestine to Bogota. In 1974, he was met by this author during his visit to Colombia. He was a committed Muslim, eager to see his children grow as Muslims. Thus, he sent back his wife and children to Palestine so they may learn Arabic and Islamic life. He remained in Bogota alone with his elder son, aged 37, to run his business. On a Sunday of January 1987, the Muslims of Bogota noticed that the shop of Al-Khatib remained closed, while it was not his habit to close on Sundays. The shop remained closed on Monday and Tuesday. The Muslims noticed also

the disappearance of the son of Al-Khatib and a Palestinian Muslim who just arrived from Palestine two months earlier. After much investigation, they found the three as dead bodies in the Bogota morgue. They were murdered outside Bogota by unknown criminals for unknown reasons. The crime was never solved.

This crime, and similar ones, convinced the Muslim Community of Bogota to organize. Indeed, in October 1987, they established and registered officially "The Muslim Welfare Society of Bogota" (AIBB), with Ibrahim Ali Salem as its first president. It was the first Muslim organization ever established in Bogota.

This was the birth of the Bogota Muslim Community. Since then, more Muslims joined AIBB and contributed to its expenses. The first action AIBB took was to buy the mosque from its president and make it a property of AIBB. They collected funds for this purpose. Then, the "Bogota Mosque" became a center of Islamization as more Muslims of Bogota stopped drinking, womenizing, gambling, etc ... and started praying and bringing their children to the Mosque for Islamic education. The number of those present in Friday prayers rose from a dozen, to above one hundred, i.e., the full capacity of the small Mosque.

The Muslim Community started celebrating Muslim festivals Islamically and stopped celebrating Christian religious festivals. In the Eid prayers, hundreds are present, with whole families and children in a sight unbelievable a few years before.

In 1988, AIBB established a temporary Islamic School where classes were given on Saturdays and Sundays to about 50 Muslim children, aged between 6 and 16. The School curriculum included Arabic language and basic Islamic principles. The Islamization of the children helped Islamize their families. AIBB is now planning to establish a full-time primary and secondary Muslim Community school that will give the official Colombian program of education in addition to Arabic and Islam in a morally Islamic atmosphere. Since

1990, AIBB started collecting funds to build the Islamic School. The Colombian Government granted AIBB a large piece of land, the future site of its full-time Mosque, Islamic school and Islamic Community Center.

On the other hand, AIBB established a Muslim cemetery, where Muslims bury their dead according to their rites. Before, Muslims were buried with Christians. The cemetery was paid for by funds collected from the Muslim Community.

It is amazing to note the big change occurring in the Muslim Community of Bogota since 1987. Now, the visitor of Bogota can notice an Islamic presence, especially during the month of Ramadhan when most of the people fast and the Mosque is full daily. Before, the Muslims of Bogota did not even know when the month of Ramadhan occurred.

Thus, the Muslim Community of Bogota gained a new confidence in itself and started attracting many non-Muslim Colombians to Islam.

7 - Colombia : Islam in the Provinces

As in Venezuela, an Islamic revival is going on in Colombia which has checked the assimilation process that went on previously to the benefit of the Christian majority. While the Muslim Community started waking up only in the 1980's, the process is still in its beginning and gaining momentum. The aim is to retrieve all the descendants of former Muslim migrations and to build enough Islamic institutions, such as mosques and full-time Islamic schools, to serve the entire Muslim Community.

Several international Islamic non-governmental organizations helped in this process after it started spontaneously. For instance, "The International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations" (IIFSO) organized in 1988 a three month course on Islamic principles for leaders of the Muslim communities of Colombia.

By 1990 count, Muslims in Colombia were organized in seven cities and towns in seven departments, these are : Micao (La Guajira) ; Buena Ventura (Valle del Cauca) ; Cali (Valle del Cauca) ; San Andres (Caribbean) ; Santa Marta (Magdalena) ; Valledupar (Cesar) ; and bogota (Cundinamarca). Furthermore, Muslim communities are being organized in a half dozen other cities and towns.

Micao (La Guajira) :

Micao is a town of about 100,000 people in the Department of La Guajira in the North-East of Columbia, near the Venezuelan border. Most of its people are American natives. The town is poor, and many of its suburbs are shanties with wooden houses and non-asphalted streets.

Micao became the town of highset Muslim concentration, and the first Muslim organization of Colombia. At present, Micao has a Muslim population of about 5.000 people (5% of total), including about 75% Sunnis and 25% Chias. There are in the town some Druze and Arab Christians as well. Most of the Muslims are of Lebanese origin, some are Palestinians. Most came to Colombia relatively recently, starting around 1960. The Muslim community of Micao is solidary, well organized, and has a great impact on the town. Mixed marriages with non-Muslims are almost inexistant.

In the 1960's and 1970's, the Muslims of Micao were on the same disintegrating paths followed by earlier Muslim migrations. In the 1970's, some of them tried to establish an "Arab Club", but the attempt had no popular support. As in Bogota, Muslims used to celebrate Muslim holidays with wine, dances, and gambling.

The change started in 1978, when a small group of young Muslims got together and rented a room from another Muslim, and they used it as a prayer hall. They started Friday prayers regularly, and some daily prayers as well.

In 1980, Ibrabim Abdul-Fattah Dib, a Lebanese Muslim, came to Micao looking for work, and due to his large experience, his presence

changed the entire Muslim scene of Micao. In a few months, he was able to attract a large number of Muslims around the "prayer-hall". He then established in Micao the first ever Muslim association to be established in Colombia: "The Muslim Welfare Association of Micao" (AIBM).

Meanwhile, the owner of the "prayer-hall" wanted back his room, thus AIBM lost its "mosque". Immediately, AIBM started a fund raising campaign. By 1982, they bought a large piece of land on which they build a full-time properly-built mosque and Islamic Center, the first in Colombia.

As soon as AIBM was established, they started a part-time Islamic School in rented facilities, teaching children Islam and Arabic language on Fridays and Saturdays. The Islamic School had a great success. In 1982, AIBM started a fund raising campaign for a full-time Islamic School. In 1987, AIBM was able to finish the School, the first in Colombia, in a beautiful building adjacent to the Mosque. On October 1987, it was opened officially. By 1990, the Islamic Primary school had 400 students, 70% Muslims and 30% non-Muslims, all receiving the official Colombia program of education in addition to Islamic principles and Arabic language in an Islamically acceptable atmosphere. In 1990, an Islamic Secondary School was build near the Islamic Primary School. Since then, the number of students has increased greatly. In 1987, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ashtar joined AIBM as its Imam.

Now, the people of Micao hear the call to prayer regularly on loudspeakers. A daily Islamic radio program of 30 minutes is given before sunset on Ramadhan. The Mosque is always full with activities. Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr became causes for celebration of the whole town.

By 1990, the Shia Muslim Community organized itself separately. They bought a piece of land on which they built another Mosque and another full-time Islamic School.

Even the secular nationalists had a chance this time as they succeeded in establishing an "Arab Club" in a rented facility where they established sports facilities and a library.

All the three sets of institutions are working together in harmony. The Muslim Community of Micao is united in its diversity. This remote small town has set the pace for growth of Islam in Colombia.

Buena Ventura (Valle del Cauca) :

Buena Ventura is a coastal town of about 50,000 people on the Pacific Ocean, in the South-West of Colombia, in the Department of the Valle del Cauca. Most of its population is originally from Africa. They live in sub-poverty conditions on agriculture and fishing. There are about 1000 Muslims in Buena Ventura and its surrounding area, most of them are Afro-Colombian revert.

Islam started in Buena Ventura around 1976, when an Afro-American Muslim sailor from the USA came on a commercial ship and remained in Buena Ventura several months. In this short time, he was able to convert a small group of Afro-Colombians to Islam. He taught them Islamic prayers and the basic Islamic principles. When he went back to the USA, he kept sending them booklets on Islam in Spanish.

This small group grew in numbers as more Afro-Colombians joined in. By 1980, they wanted to establish links with other Muslims in Colombia and contacted the Egyptian Embassy in Bogota. The Egyptian Ambassador put them in touch with Ibrabim Ali Salem. By 1981, with the help of the latter, they established the second Islamic organization of Colombia after that of Micao : "The Colombia Islamic Union" (UIC), headed by Juan Paulo.

UIC opened immediately a mosque in Buena Ventura in a small rented room and an office. It then started an organized call to Islam to the Afro-Colombians. They gave weekly lectures on Sundays and held regularly the Friday and daily prayers. More people joined in and became Muslim.

In 1988, the Iranian Embassy helped by paying the rental of the "mosque" and sent Juan Paulo to pilgrimage in Mecca. Later, the Iranian Embassy rented for the Muslim Community, a larger facility made up by a three-storey building in which was established the mosque and the Islamic School.

Now, the Muslim Community of Buena Ventura is trying to stand on its own feet, and their numbers and knowledge of Islam keep increasing.

Cali (Valle del Cauca)

Cali is the third largest city of Colombia after Bogota and Medellin, with a population of 1.4 million. It is located in the Department of Valle del Cauca in the South-West of Colombia, to the East of Buena Ventura. It is as modern clean city, inhabited mainly by people of Spanish origin.

Cali has been the home of an old Arab immigration from Greater Syria. When Akram Zu'ayter visited it on 5-8-1948, it had already a non-organized thriving Arab Community. He established a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine in Cali", headed by Luis Zakhur, one of the wealthiest men of Cali, and with Farid Kahhale, a Muslim, as Vice-President. There were many Muslims in that Committee. Most of them emigrated to Cali in the 1930's, mainly from Palestine.

This Committee did not last. But in 1987, the about 400 Muslim Palestinians of Cali established the "Arab Palestinian Club". There is in Cali also about 200 Shia Muslims from Lebanon, from old migration. In 1991, the total number of Muslims of Cali may be around 1,000. About 100 Muslims live in Palmyra, a town at about 20 km from Cali. Most Muslims of Cali and nearby towns are well to do by ignorant of Islam.

In 1987, Cali Muslims were visited by Sheikh Mustafa Abdul-Ghani Ahmed who urged them to organize in a Muslim Community. In 1988, Abdul Hamid Taha, a Colombian-born Muslim of Palestinian

origin, from Palmyra, studying at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Cali, took the initiative to rent a room in Cali and convert it into a Mosque and Islamic School. He was able to attract about 20 Muslim children to learn Islam and Arabic. The parents paid the rent of the "Mosque". Abdul-Hamid Taha taught the children, acted as Imam and led the Friday prayers.

By 1990, and with the help of the Muslim communities of Micao and Bogota, the "Islamic Welfare Society of Cali" (AIBC) was established and better facilities were rented for the Mosque and Islamic School.

San Andres (Caribbean).

San Andres is a small island in the Caribbean Sea, off the coast of Nicaragua. In 1900, the USA gave it to Colombia in exchange for Panama. It is still claimed by Nicaragua. The island has a population of less than 100,000 people, most of European origin. Their main activity is tourism.

There are about 300 Muslims in San Andres. Most are Sunni Muslims of Lebanese origin. Some are Palestinians and others are Shia Muslims. As elsewhere, there are also few Druze and Arab Christian families in San Andres. Most Muslims are of recent immigration.

They live of trade with Panama, as San Andres is a free zone. The Muslim Community of San Andres is tightly knit. Most Muslim children speak only Spanish. Their parents worry about their morality, as most tourists move around completely naked.

In 1986, a group of young Muslims established "The Islamic Welfare Association of San Andres" (ABISA). They immediately rented a small room where they started regular Friday prayers. In 1987, they brought in a young Imam from Lebanon and paid his salary. The Imam brought new life to the Muslim Community, as most Muslims joined ABISA.

In 1988, the Imam returned to Lebanon, but the momentum he started continued. In 1989, ABISA bought a piece of land with funds raised locally. They started immediately the construction of a Mosque and a full-time Islamic School. In 1993, the two projects were finished. Thus, another remote area became the site of the third organized Muslim Community in Colombia, followed by Bogota and then by many others.

Santa Marta (Magdalena) :

Santa Marta, in the Department of Magdalena, is a port on the Caribbean Sea at 70 km to the East of Barranquilla. Many of its 50,000 people are African in origin. They live from agriculture, producing coffee and bananas, and from the port.

There are 300 Muslims in this town, 90% of Lebanese origin, more specifically from the village of Ba'lul. The others are mostly from Palestine. Muslims started coming to this town since 1960 to work in manufacturing. They are well united, but were on the verge of being lost to Islam.

In 1987, Najib Sakhr, a Lebanese Muslim, rented a small house and used it as a Mosque and a part-time Islamic School. The first congregational prayer was held in the first Friday of Ramadhan of that year. The AIBM Executive Committee of Micao came forwards to help this Muslim Community stand on its feet. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ashtar, the Imam of Micao, led the Eid-ul-Fitr prayer in Santa Marta that year. He stayed later for a while giving Arabic classes to children in the morning, Qur'an and Islamic principles in the evenings, and lectures to the adults. Before the end of the year the "Islamic Welfare Society of Santa Marta" (AIBSM) was established.

In 1989, AIBSM, bought the house that was used as a Mosque with contributions from the Muslim Community. This community progressed greatly since then, with the youth and women being active in the Mosque . AISM is planning to start a full-time Islamic School.

The Imam of Micao visits the Muslims of Santa Marta regularly to respond to their religious needs.

Valledupar (Cesar):

This town of about 200,000 people, most mestizos is located half-way between Santa Marta and Micao in the Department of Cesar.

About 150 Muslims live in Valledupar, all from Lebanon with the exception of few from Palestine. They own cloth shops and they live reasonably well. Most of these Muslims arrived in the 1960's and married local non-Muslim women. Thus, the second generation born in Colombia was on the verge of being lost to Islam.

In 1987, they were visited by Imam Mustafa Abdul Ghani Ahmed, who taught them how to pray. In 1988, this community formed the "Islamic welfare Society of Valledupar" (AIBV). Hamid Qamar, a young Palestinian Muslim, offered the Muslim Community, free of charge, a room in his building to be used as prayer hall. A Muslim library was added later to this small mosque including books and video tapes. The acting Imam is Mohammed Tritni, a young local Muslim. He leads the Friday prayers and with the help of a Committee presents Islam to non-Muslims as well. The Imam of Micao visits the Muslim Community of Valladupar regularly.

By 1990, AIBV started a temporary Muslim School. But it went through difficulties because of the unavailability of trained teachers.

Other Communities:

There are Muslim communities in many other cities which up to 1990 were not yet organized. Some of them started to organize.

Medellin (Antioquia), the second largest city of Colombia, to the North-West of Bogota, is the home of about 500 Muslims, most from Palestine, but also from Lebanon and Syria. They are in an advanced process of assimilation and need to be organized.

Barranquilla (Antlantico), the fourth largest city of Colombia, has more than 1,000 Muslims, descendants of old migration from Syria,

Palestine and Lebanon. This city was already visited by Akram Zu'ayter in 16 - 21/1/1948. He found a thriving Arab Community who established "Alhambra Club" for its social gatherings, and an Arab radio station. Most of them were Palestinian, others were Lebanese and Syrian. There was one single Arab organization, the "Colombian Arab Youth", headed by Simon Saad, as mentioned above. Zu'ayter established a "Committee for the Support of Palestine in Barranquilla", headed by Ilyas Al-Mufadda, one of the wealthiest Arabs, a Christian from Beit Jala in Palestine. Now, most Barranquilla Muslims are Colombia born and speak only Spanish. Most work in business, and are well to do. They established a "Lebanese Club" and an "Arab Palestinian Club", but no Islamic organization of any sort yet. Some of them are nevertheless trying to establish one.

Cartagena (Bolivar) was also visited by Akram Zu'ayter on 21 - 26/1/1948. He found a large Arab Community, including many Muslims. On January 23, he established the "Committee for the Support of Palestine in Cartagena" in which several Muslims were present such as Tewfiq Saqr, Tewfiq Barbur, and Yousef Yabroudi. At present, there are several hundred Muslims in Cartagena that are not organized.

Cucuta (Norte de Santander), a city of 360,000 people, is near the border with Venezuela. It has a Muslim population of about 100, most from Kafr Malik in Palestine. They are financially well to do due to their thriving business, but they have established neither "Club" nor "Mosque".

Pasto (Narino) is near the border with Peru in the South-West. It has a Muslim population of about 300. Most came from Kafr Malik in Palestine to Pasto in the 1960's where they trade in textile and shoes. They are economically well off. They developed a habit to send their children home in Palestine and bring them back to Colombia only when they are grown up so they may grow up speaking Arabic and living as Muslims. They also avoid marrying non-Muslims. They

established the "Arab Palestinian Club", but have not yet established any Islamic association.

Ipiales (Narino) is a small town near the border with Ecuador at 70 km from Pasto. It has a Muslim population of about 300, most from Kafr Malik in Palestine. They are in the same situation as those of Pasto, with a useless "Arab Palestinian Club" and no Islamic institutions. They are also well to do economically.

In Conclusion:

In 1990, the different Islamic associations of Colombia united in the "Islamic Federation of Colombia" to work towards the creation of one Colombian Ummah.

Thus, the Colombian Muslim Community is in a full process of resurrection, with the Lebanese taking the lead (4 organized communities) with the Palestinians (2 communities) and the African Colombians (1 community) starting off and the Syrians still lagging. It is expected that in the 1990's many more Muslim communities will be organized, and Mosques and Islamic Schools will be built. Already many Colombians of European and American-Indian origin are embracing Islam in Europe and North America. Their example will certainly be followed by their countrymen at home.

8 - Islam in Peru

Peru is located in the North-West of South America. It has an area of 1,258,215 km², and a fast increasing population of 22, 200,000 in 1991 (8,640,000 in 1951). Peru is limited to the North by Colombia and Ecuador, to the East by Brazil and Bolivia, to the South by Chile, and to West by the Pacific Ocean.

Peru is divided geographically into three regions : the coastal deserts ; the Andes mountains ; and the Amazonian plains in the interior. Because of cool streams in the Pacific Ocean, the temperature

in the coast is mild. On the mountains the climate is temperate and rain is abundant. Whereas in the Amazone, the climate is tropical.

Peru is a republic divided into 24 provinces. Its capital Lima, near the Pacific coast, is the largest city of the country with a population of 4.6 million in 1991. The other larger cities are much smaller than the capital : Arequipa (590,000 inhabitants) ; and Trujillo (490,000). The official language is Spanish but most people speak Quechua and Aymara. Indeed, Peruvians of Spanish origin form less than 10% of the total population, the rest are either Mestizos or American-Indians, descendants of the famous Incas. The greatest majority of the population is nominally Catholic, about half a million are Protestant. Peru had in 1991 about 3,000 Muslims, concentrated mainly in the Lima suburb of Miraflores, others are scattered all over the country.

Before the Spanish invasion, Peru was the site of a great Inca civilization. The capital of the Inca Empire was Guzco (255,000 inhabitants in 1991). In 1532, it was invaded by the Spanish led by Pizarro. They killed the Inca king, plundered the country and enslaved the entire population. In 1544, Spain declared the entire Inca Empire a Spanish colony. It remained so until 1821, when Peru rebelled against Spain and declared its independence, recognized by Spain in 1824. In 1879, war broke out between Peru and Chile. It lasted until 1884 with the defeat of Peru and loss of much territory, part of which was returned in 1929.

The economy of Peru is that of a developing country, based on fishing as Peru became one of the largest exporters of fish in the world. Next comes agriculture which occupies about 36% of the population, producing maize, rice, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, as well as beef and mutton. Much minerals are also extracted, such as silver, copper, zinc, lead, and gold. The industry of Peru is based on fishing, textile, petrochemicals and food processing.

Islam reached Peru with the Andalucians in the 16th Century, as in the rest of Latin America. Many Arabic stories entered the lore of

Peru through this immigration. Also, Andalucian history influenced greatly the literature of Peru, such as a novel of Ricardo Palma based on the life of Prince Ibrahim, the grandfather of the Omeyyad Calif Maruan II, in which hospitality led a man to forgive his host when he discovered that he was the murderer of his own son. It also influenced the architecture through the Mudejar (Mudajjan) style of which the Cathedral of Lima is one of the best examples.

But the modern presence of Islam in Peru dates from the end of the 19th Century when many Arabs arrived from Greater Syria which was then part of the Ottoman Empire. The majority were Christian, their descendants could be estimated today at about 30,000. Most of these immigrants, including the few Muslims among them, were farmers and laborers of poor cultural level. They eventually became small merchants, especially in textiles. Many Muslims remained of humble economic status. They fell easy prey to assimilation in the Christian majority. By 1908, about 500 Muslims arrived from China, and most of their descendants today are lost to Islam.

Akram Zu'ayter visited Lima on 19 – 28/12/1947. He estimated the Arab population of Peru to be about 4,000 only, mostly Christian from Beit Jala in Palestine, and few Lebanese and Syrians. He found a "Palestinian Club" in Lima headed by Farah Shehadeh, a Muslim. On 26/12/1947, Zu'ayter formed a "Committee for the Support of Palestine in Peru" headed by Hanna Makhlquf, a Christian. There was no Islamic organization or institution or activity of any sort. The Muslim Community of Peru seemed to be doomed to assimilation. Among the Muslims of Peru who received Zu'ayter was Muti' Atallah Hamideh, originally from Mazra'at Bani Murrah near Ramallah in Palestine.

In 1961, the Muslims of Peru were found to number in the official census 196 people only. This was a gross underestimate.

This author visited Lima on 2 – 4/1/1974 and met with the Muslim Community in Miraflores. Most Muslims were from Mazra'at Bani

Murrah. Their leader was Wasfi Hamideh, the then owner of Damasco Hotel of Lima. He emigrated to Peru in 1953. There was no Islamic institutions or organizations, but Lima had a "Palestinian Club". The first immigrants from Mazra'at Bani Murrah were the two cousins Taleb Ahmed Hamideh and Muti' Atallah Hamideh (mentioned above). They emigrated to Peru in 1924, and brought in later a string of their relatives. As their business expanded the two emigrated to Miami (Florida) in the 1960's, but remained in close contact with the Muslim Community of Peru.

This author found in Lima an unorganized but yet well-knit Muslim Community, made up in its majority by people of Palestinian origin but including Syrians, Lebanese and local revert. They had a daily Arabic one-hour radio emission and one-hour Islamic one on Fridays. This author urged them to establish an Islamic organization to save themselves and their children from complete assimilation.

In 1974, the Muslims of Lima established "The Islamic Welfare Society of Peru" (AIBIP). In 1987, they opened an Islamic Center in a house gifted to AIBIP by Muti' Atallah Hamideh, where congregational prayers are held regularly, and children are taught Arabic and Islam. They brought an Imam to act as religious leader and teacher. AIBIP is in close contact with the Muslims of Brazil. In 1987, its Imam was Sheikh Ahmed Al-Mustafa Al-Siddiq from Egypt.

There is another Islamic Association in Lima, called the "Islamic Union". The Muslims are also planning to open an Islamic Hospital in Lima.

There is also in Lima a "Center of Islamic Studies" headed by Professor Rafael Guevara Bazan. It does an outstanding work in studying the history of Islam in South America.

9 - Islam in Ecuador

Ecuador is located in the North-West of South America. It has an area of 270,670 Km² and had a population of 9,900,000 in 1991, and 3,145,000 in 1951. Thus, the population of Ecuador has more than tripled in the last 40 years. The country is limited to the North by Colombia, to the East and South by Peru and to the West by the Pacific Ocean. The Galapagos Islands facing the Ecuadorian coast are also part of Ecuador.

The country is divided into two main geographical regions : the first is the Sierra, part of the Andes Mountains, made up of two mountain chains running from North to south including many volcanos and reaching a maximum altitude of 6,267 meters ; the second region is made up of the coastal plains. In the mountains the climate is mild to cold, and in the coast it is tropical as the equator crosses the country.

Ecuador is a republic divided into 21 provinces. Its capital is Quito (1,230,000 inhabitants in 1991). Its largest city is the port of Guayaquil (17 million people in 1991). The third largest city is Cuenos (220, 000 inhabitants in 1991). About 10% of the Ecuaturian population is of European origin, 5% of African origin, 60% are local Indians, mostly Incas, and 25% are Mestizos. Most of the people are nominally catholic, but there is an increasing number of Protestants. Ecuador had a population of about 2,000 Muslims (0,02% of total population) in 1991. The official language is Spanish, but most people speak Quechua.

Ecuador was part of the Inca Empire when it was conquered by Pizarro for the Spanish in 1532. The Spanish conquerors enslaved the local population. In 1800, the people rebelled and joined Greater Colombia with Venezuela, Colombia and Panama. In 1830, Ecuador seceded from this federation and became an independent state. In

1942, the country lost a large part of its land area to Peru as a result of a war between the two states.

Ecuador's economy is based on agriculture, producing rice, cacao, bananas, coffee on the coast, and potatoes and wheat in the mountains. The country is rich in mineral products such as gold, silver, lead and copper as well as oil. Industry is limited to textiles and wood.

Muslim immigration to Ecuador started by the end of last century coming first from Syria and Lebanon. The number of Muslim migrants increased between the two World Wars, and Palestinians started to arrive.

Akram Zu'ayter visited Ecuador from 28/12/1947 to 5/1/ 1948. He visited both Quito and Guayaquil. He then estimated the number of Arabs to be about 2,000, most of them Christian. In Guayaquil he found a "United Lebanese Club" headed by Jabran Massouh, a Syrian Christian, originally from Lattaquie. On December 31, he established the "Association for the Defense of Palestine in Guayaquil" with sixty members headed by Rasheed Torbiyah. There was also in Guayaquil an "Association of Ecuadorian Arab Youth", headed by Estefan Qazhiyeh. In Quito, Zu'ayter formed a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine in Quito", headed by Abu Sa'id Abdul-Ghani Dassoum, a Lebanese Muslim. There were other Muslims in the Executive Committee, such as Baheej Al-Sohl and Sulayman Abd-Rabbo. There was no other Arab organization in Quito.

There was no Islamic organization in Ecuador. The several hundred Muslims who lived in the country were mostly of the second and third generations, highly dispersed geographically, utterly disorganized Islamically, and deeply assimilated. However, they were more concentrated in Quito and Guayaquil.

By 1991, the number of Ecuadorians of Arab origin could be estimated to be about 25,000, of which about 2,000 could be of Muslim origin.

Until in 1986 there was no apparent Muslim presence in Ecuador and no Muslim organization or institution of any sort anywhere in the country. In that year, Ahmed Ali Saifi, head of the "Centro de Divulgacion do Islam para America Latina" in Sao Paulo (Brazil) visited Quito with the hope of establishing contact with Muslims and organizing them in a Muslim Community.

He met the sisters Layla and Salwa Dassoum, members of a well established Muslim Lebanese family in Ecuador, daughters of the Dassoum met by Zu'ayter in 1947 - 48. Saifi met also with Mohammed Sulayman Al-As'ad. With a group of Muslims of Quito led by the three mentioned above, they established the "Khalid ibn Ali-Walid Islamic Association" (AIKU) in Quito, the first Muslim organization in Ecuador. Its first president was Mohammed Sulayman Al-A'sar. Later, AIKU established a mosque in Quito where Islamic and Arabic classes are given and prayers are held regularly. Since 1986, the Muslim Community of Quito has witnessed a true revival with many returning to Islam and others reverting to it, including the formerly non-Muslim husbands of the two sisters.

In 1986, Saifi also visited Guayaquil and through the effort of a Palestinian Muslim, Yusuf Hamou Owais, established a section of the above organization in Guayaquil.

The Muslim Community of Ecuador now tries to establish links with the remnants of the Muslims in the provinces so as to bring them back to Islam and organize them in Muslim communities. Islam in Ecuador is thus entering a new era of growth reversing the assimilating trend that lasted until 1986.

10 - Islam in Chile

Chile is on the Pacific coast of South America. It has an area of 456,945 km² and had a population of 13.7 million in 1991 and almost six millions in 1951. Chile has an odd shape, as it is about 4,500 km in

length from North to South and averaging 170 km in width. It is limited to the North by Bolivia and Peru, to the East by Argentina, and the West and South by the Pacific Ocean. Chile's economy is based on fishing, agriculture and mining (copper). Its industries are based on copper and iron.

Chile is made up by the western slopes of the Andes mountains whose peaks reach a maximum altitude of 6,870 meters. As the country extends from 17° to 55° South, it practically encompasses all climates, from desertic in the extreme North to quasi arctic in the extreme South, the Tierra del Fuego.

Chile is divided administratively in 25 departments. Its capital, Santiago, is its largest city with 4.8 million people in 1991. Other larger cities are much smaller : Vina del Mar (300,000 inhabitants) ; Concepcion (290,000) ; and Valparaiso (280,000). Spanish is the official language and the mother tongue of more than 90% of the people. About 85% of Chileans are Catholic, the rest are mostly Protestant. Ethnically, about 25% of the people are of European origin, 65% Mestizos, 5% Natives, and the remaining 5% are of diverse origins. Chile has a population of at least 200,000 of Arab origin, mostly Christians from Lebanon and Palestine (in majority from Bethlehem and Beit Jala).

Chile was part of the Inca Empire until it was conquered by Pedro de Valdivia for Spain in 1540. It remained part of Peru until it rebelled in 1810 and declared its independence in 1818. War broke out between Chile, Bolivia and Peru in 1836 and 1879 leading to the victory of Chile and its expansion over large territories from Peru and Bolivia.

Chile, like the rest of Latin America, was influent by the Andalucian Muslim culture, especially in literature. Among the Chilean writers who were most influenced by Islamic literature is Pedro Prado who applies Arabic meter to Spanish poetry. He Published in 1921 a book of poems under the pen-name of "Rezai

Roshan". Many stories of Andalucian Muslim literature became part of the Chilean lore.

Today, most Muslims of Chile hail from Arab migration from Greater Syria which started around 1885. Most of the first arrivals were Christians. Some Muslims were among them who kept coming to Chili until 1926. A total of about 1,000 Muslims arrived in Chili.

The first Muslim immigrants were of modest means and did not have much knowledge about Islam. Their socio-economic and cultural conditions did not allow them to bring wives from their countries. They married local Christian women. Their children became Christian, and the Christian wife often succeeded in converting the ignorant Muslim husband to her religion. Thus, most of the descendants of Muslims are Christian today. However, many keep a vague memory of their Islamic origin. They marry in the Church, they baptize their children and when they die they pray for them in the Church. Today, there are about 2,000 Muslims in Chile, half of them are in Santiago, the others are scattered in the provinces. They come from Palestine and Syria in their majority. Some are of Bosnian and East Indian in origin. However, it is estimated that Chileans of partly Muslim Arab origin were at least 10,000 in 1991.

In the 1920's, Chilean Muslims were more numerous. Many emigrated back home or to neighboring countries, and the children of many others were assimilated in the Christian majority. Most Muslims are small tradesmen or blue collar workers. Some became rich and famous such as Mohammed Bathish (originally from Syria) and Rafael Mussa.

The Arab Christian Community is much more numerous than the Muslim one, richer and much better organized. For instance, the Arab Christian Orthodox have an Arabic School for the orphans and a hospital. Muslims are admitted to these institutions easily. Consequently, they were doubly assimilated, within the Christian Arab Community and in the Christian country as whole. There is a

large "Palestinian Club" in Santiago, one of the best in South America. There is also a Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the University financed by Egypt.

The first Islamic institution of Chile, the "Union Musulmane de Chile" (UMC), was established on 25/9/1926 in Santiago. But as its members were reduced in number through emigration and christianization, it practically lapsed in 1945.

When Akram Zu'ayter visited Chile in 28/11 - 19/12/1947, he found no Muslim organization, but a multitude of Arab institutions, mostly controlled by Christians but serving Muslims as well. The main ones in Santiago were : "The Association of the Youth of Homs" (Homs is a Syrian city), established in 1913, controlled the Syrian Hospital mentioned above, its President was Wasfi Haddad, a Christian Orthodox Arab. Another was "The Arab Welfare Society" which controlled the home for the elderly mentioned above. A third was the "Syrian Sport Club" which run an Arabic one-hour radio emission. Yet another was "The Syrian Ladies Association" headed by Mounira Haddad. There was a "Syrian Club" headed by Hafez Labban, a "Lebanese Club" headed by Vincent Rahhal, and a "Palestinian Club" headed by Hanna Said. Zu'ayter established on 29/11/1947 a "Central Arab Committee of Chile" headed by Nicolas Jarour.

The Arab Community of Santiago produced several papers, such as "Al Watan", in both Spanish and Arabic, edited by Arab students at the University of Santiago ; "Mundo Arabe", in Spanish, edited by Georges Abou-Sabbah Zarab in 1947 until 1974; and "Palestina Patria Martyr" which lapsed in 1967. There was also a radio emission called "Voice of Palestine" which lasted many years. It was run in 1973 – 74 by Fouad Habash.

In 1958, UMC was revived by Tawfik Mohammed Rumié, a Chilean national. He has born in Syria in 1913 and emigrate to Chile with his parents in 1928. When this author visited Santiago on

31/12/1973, and 1/1/1974, he found UMC a well organized society headed by Tawfik Rumié, who was then a translator in the Syrian Embassy. The other office bearers were Hazm Al-Khatib (Secretary), Abdullah Mustafa Idriss (treasurer), Mahmoud Hammad (Vice-President). However, UMC had no Mosque, no school, no Imam. Abdullah Mustafa Idriss, born in Chile around 1923 of a Syrian father and a Chilean mother, did his best to teach the children of the Community Arabic and Islamic principles.

UMC shared an office with another organization called "The National Arab Union". It helped Muslims in need, arranged for Islamic marriages, and organized meetings of the Community during Eids. UMC also managed the Muslim cemetery of Santiago where Muslims are buried following Islamic rites. There was no congregational prayers, neither on Fridays nor on weekdays.

Later, UMC rented a house in Santiago which it used as its Islamic Center, contributed to by the Muslim World League in Mecca. Then, Friday and daily congregational prayers were held regularly, classes were given to young and adults and the Muslim Community started growing in numbers with the addition of new revert, many descendants of Muslims.

In 1983, a UMC youth chapter was established. It became quickly very active, especially in travelling around Chile and establishing contact with forgotten Muslim communities. It is expected that many of these communities will soon be brought back to Islam and organized.

In 1985, UMC gathered funds from the small and poor Muslim Community of Chile and bought a piece of land in a residential district of Santiago. On this land, UMC built a beautiful large mosque, "Mezquita As-Salam", the first of Chile. The mosque includes classrooms for teaching Islam and Arabic. The UMC President and Imam today is still Tawfik Rumié, who is loved by all, and the treasurer is Kamal Sufan.

In Vina del Mar, there is a number of Muslims who have practically forgotten Islam. But the Muslim Community of Santiago is trying to revive them. In fact, the uncle of Tewfik Rumié established an Islamic School in Vina del Mar in the past, but it closed down after he emigrated back to Syria. When Akram Zu'ayter visited Vina del Mar in the past, he found a "Pan Arab Club" headed by Georges Traboulsi, an "Arab Club" headed by Nasser Ja'ar, and a "Palestinian Club" headed by Hanna Sa'eed. He also established a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine in Valparaiso and Vina del Mar" headed by Sobhi Al-Khoury.

In nearby Valparaiso there was in 1948 the "Association of the Ladies of Homs" headed then by Salwa Mallouk and an "Arab Sports Club" headed by Afif Mallouk. The present Muslim Community of Valparaiso is yet to be gathered and organized.

Thus, the Chilean Muslim Community which was thriving between the two World Wars, became on the verge of extinction in the 1970's. Now the number of Muslims increases monthly, and so does the interest of the Chilean public in Islam. However, the Muslim Community of Chile complains of lack of funds and poor support from international Islamic organization and Muslim countries, inspite of the complete freedom of religion in the country.

11 - Islam in Bolivia

Bolivia is located in the Mid-West of South America. It has an area of 1,098,581 km² and had population of about 7 millions people in 1991, and 3,072,000 in 1951. Bolivia is a land-locked country, limited to the North and East by Brazil, to the West by Peru and Chile and to the South by Argentina and Paraguay.

Bolivia is divided geographically into two main region : The west made up by the Andes mountains reaching very high altimetry, and the east constituted by the Amazonian plains opening up on Brazil.

The climate on the mountains is temperate and in the plains, it is tropical. Most of the population is concentrated on the mountains. Bolivia is a poor underdeveloped country whose economy is based on agriculture (maize, rice, wheat, sugarcane, cotton, coffee, and cacao) and mining (oil, gas, zinc, antimony and tungsten). Its industry is limited.

Bolivia is a Republic divided administratively into nine provinces. Its capital La Paz, at an altitude of 3,600 meters, is its largest city (more than one million people 1991). The other important cities are Santa Cruz (630,000 inhabitants), Cochabamba (380,000) and Oruro (200,000). The official language is Spanish, but most people speak Quechua (40%), Aymara and other local languages. Only about 14% of the population is of European origin, mainly Spanish. The rest are either pure American Indians or Mestizos. The greatest majority of the population is Catholic. Protestants number around 100,000 and are increasing. Among the population of Bolivia about 6,000 are of Arab origin, mainly Christian. Muslims number around 1,000, mostly of Arab origin.

Bolivia was part of the Inca Empire. In 1538, it was conquered by Spain which destroyed its culture and civilization. It remained under Spanish colonization and exploitation. In 1809, it rebelled under the leadership of Simon Bolivar. In 1825, the country won its independence as Bolivia from the name of its liberator, Bolivar.

In 1879, Bolivia entered in a war with Chile in which it was defeated losing a large territory on the Pacific Ocean, thus becoming landlocked. Bolivia lost more territories to Brazil in its war in 1904, and to Paraguay in 1932.

Most of the Islamic presence in Bolivia is the result of migration from Greater Syria since the turn of the century. The first immigrants, mostly Christian, came from Syria and Lebanon, then more Palestinians and more Muslims arrived. Most Arabs, Muslims and Christians, worked in trade and some of them became prominent. In

the 1960's, many Arabs, including Muslims, started emigrating away from Bolivia to other South American countries.

Akram Zu'ayter did not visit Bolivia during his tour to South America in 1947 - 1948. But he helped establish the first ever Arab organization in the country, the "Central Arab Committee" headed by Antonio Sa'eed and with the membership of such Muslims as Abdul-Ghani Shaqra and Habib Shaqra.

When this author visited La Paz on 1-2/1/1974, he found no Islamic organization or institution in the country. There was about 100 Muslim families in La Paz, including the employees of the Egyptian Embassy, the only Muslim Embassy in the country then. There were many prominent Muslims in La Paz, such Fareed Bakir, the Honorary Council of South Korea, an industrial who emigrated from Palestine to Bolivia in 1948 ; Ahmed Sabbagh, one of La Paz prominent businessmen ; General Jameel Taha, in the Bolivian army, of Lebanese origin ; Hadi Tahhan, a journalist ; Saadallah Rajab ; and Moussa Ismael ; and many others. Most were originally from Palestine, few from Lebanon.

The most prominent Muslim of La Paz was Abdel-Moumen Ahmed Beaumont, a son of a former Council of Bolivia in Morocco. Abdel-Moumen reverted to Islam in Morocco in 1972 and came back to Bolivia with the specific intent of preaching Islam. He opened a room in his house to be used as a mosque. It was the only "mosque" in La Paz where Friday prayers were held regularly due to the efforts of Abdel-Moumen. These were also held in the Egyptian Embassy. There was then no Islamic organization in Bolivia.

Outside La Paz, there is a Muslim Community of about 50 families in Santa Cruz. They were never organized and they are greatly assimilated in the Christian Community around them.

The third Muslim group in Bolivia, about fifty families, lives in Cochabamba. Ismael Akili is the first Muslim to have emigrated to

Cochabamba in 1920 from Palestine. He died and left a large family. He was followed by others. They are not organized.

The Muslims of Bolivia are not organized. Their children are not receiving any Islamic education. Unless they form an organized Muslim Community with its institutions they are doomed to complete assimilation.

12 - Conclusions

The growth of Islamic presence in the Andean countries started in the 1960's, but its take-off was in the 1980's. This could readily be seen from the number of Islamic associations in the region as reported in Table 12.1. Indeed, there was only one single Islamic association in the Andean states in 1960, in Chile. In 1970, they became two with a second one established in Venezuela. In 1980, their number doubled to four with more Islamic associations established in Colombia and Peru. The 1980's saw a great growth in the number of Islamic associations in the different cities of Venezuela and Colombia bringing the total to 24 in the entire Andean Region. This number is expected to reach 80 in the year 2000.

Table 12.1: Number of Islamic Associations in the Andean states

Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Venezuela	0	1	1	12	35
Colombia	0	0	1	8	30
Peru	0	0	1	1	4
Ecuador	0	0	0	2	6
Chile	1	1	1	1	3
Bolivia	0	0	0	0	2
Total	1	2	4	24	80

The increase of the number of Islamic Associations is a good indicator of the degree of Islamization of the population, as they act as the organized "Jamaats". However, the diversity of religious, cultural, educational, and social services, offered by each Islamic association is an other important indicator of the depth of such Islamization.

The only Islamic Association present in 1960, (in Santiago de Chile) supplied only a symbol of Islamic presence, as it had only rented room in an apartment, used as offices. There was no Mosque, no prayer hall, no School, no congregational prayers, etc... The association played the role of a focal point for the Muslim Community in the city, and offered irregular religious, cultural, educational and social services. Later, such services became more regular. The Islamic associations established subsequently in the Region all struggled to establish a properly-built Mosque and full-time Primary and Secondary Islamic School giving the Governmental curriculum along with Arabic language and Islamic studies. In 1980, there was no properly built mosque nor any Islamic school in the entire Andean Region. In 1990, there were four such Mosques (three in Venezuela and one in Colombia) and four such Schools (three in Venezuela and one in Colombia). It is expected that each Islamic Association will establish soon its Mosque and its full-time Islamic School.

The vectors of this Islamic revival are naturally the Muslim migrants to this region. Considering only Muslim immigration since the late 19th Century, it could be estimated that the number of those who are partially descendants of Muslims in the Andean States to be around one million people. Only about the tenth of this number identify as Muslims. If there was no Islamic revival nor any new Islamic immigration, one would have expected the entire Muslim Community to be assimilated in the non-Muslim majority.

However, the Islamic revival that accelerated in the 1980's and continues unabated today, not only stopped this assimilative trend, but actually reversed it. Although such Islamic revival is universal

today, one may try to analyze the special situation of the Andean states, by considering separately three main elements of Muslim presence : Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian, and four main elements of the non-Muslim population : Arab Christian, American African, indigenous Indian, and American European.

The Lebanese were the first vectors of the Islamic renaissance in the Andean region in particular, and in the American Continent in general. Until 1967, the Lebanese Muslims were identifying first as Arabs and they were happy to organize with non-Muslim Arabs in "clubs" that were either gathering people originating from the same town, or all Arabs independently of religion. These were the heydays of Arab Nationalism, which in the Andean states was at the detriment of the Islamic identity of those who were Muslims, as they tried to wipe out their social distance with the non-Muslim Arabs. The fall of Arab nationalism after the defeat in the 1967 Six Day War, led to the failure of such organizations, and created a void in the organizational set-up of the Arab Diaspora of the Andes. The 1973 Ramadhan War and the following Oil crises tilted the balance towards a more outspoken Islamic identity among Lebanese Muslims. The Lebanese Civil War enhanced this trend and send more migrants to the Andean States. These new immigrants were more committed, better experienced and more knowledgeable. They started the take-off of the Islamic revival.

The Palestinians came to the Andean countries in a continuous trickle since World War I. Until the partition of Palestine in 1948, their tendency toward Arabic rather than Islamic identity was identical to that of the Lebanese. Since then, Palestinians started establishing Palestinian clubs, which played within the Palestinian Community, in the beginning, the same assimilative role played before by the Arab clubs to the benefit of the Christian majority. After the Six-day War in 1967, a new flow of Palestinian emigrants, Muslim in their greatest majority, arrived in the Andean Region. Thus, outside Chile, the

members of the Palestinian clubs became, for the first time, in their majority Muslim. They stopped playing the assimilative role of the Palestinian Muslim minority in the Palestinian Christian majority. But they became the seat of a political struggle reflecting the image of the Palestinians in general. With the start of the Intifadah in the late 1980's, a return to Islamic values started to appear in the Palestinian Community and new Islamic associations started to emerge. Either the Palestinian club was converted into an Islamic association, such as in Lima (Peru) or the Islamic association is established separately, such as in Valencia (Venezuela). Thus, the Islamic revival among the Palestinians came after that of the Lebanese.

The Syrians emigrated to the Andean states before World War II, with few arrivals afterwards. As a community, they are still to experience an Islamic revival. As individuals, many of those born in the Andean Region have been outstanding in leading a true Islamic rebirth in such places as Quito (Ecuador) and elsewhere.

Islam is universal and assimilative. Once an Islamic association is established, independently by whom, it tends to take in all Muslims. It also attracts interested non-Muslims.

Among these, the African Americans are the closest to Islam. Already, through the influence of their US brothers, an African Colombian Muslim community has been established in Buena Ventura. It acted as a catalyst for the return of many Colombians back to Islam. The same effect started in Venezuela. It is expected that a multitude of new Islamic associations will be established in 1990's by the Colombians and Venezuelans of African origin.

Next to the African Americans, the closest to the Muslims are the Christian Arabs, who share with them many cultural characteristics. In Arab countries, the communal frontiers are well defined, but in the land of immigration they became easily crossable. In the absence of Islamic organization, the crossing is towards the Christian side. In a well organized Muslim community it is towards the Muslim side.

Thus, many descendants of Christian Arabs have embraced Islam in the Andean States.

Next to the African Americans and the Christian Arabs come the indigenous American Indians, especially the Quechua. They started leaking to Islam as a liberating spiritual force, and many became Muslim. More are expected to do so in the future.

Many citizens of Spanish origin are becoming proud of their Andalucian Islamic origin and started returning to Islam. In some communities, such as in Santiago de Chile, their numbers are equivalent to those of Muslims of Arab origin.

The importance of the "International Conferences of Latin American Muslims", organized by the "International Islamic Federation of Students Organizations" (IIFSO), is essential in the coordination between the different Muslim communities of Latin America.

The first such conference was held in Mexico City on 29/1-2/2/1987. It was an occasion for the leaders of the Muslim communities to meet, often for the first time, and exchange views and experiences.

The second such conference was held in Bogota (Colombia) on 7-11/1/1988. It was attended by about 100 delegates from all Latin America. The decisions taken in this conference are extremely important and received widespread acceptance, as they set the blueprint of Islamic growth in the American Continent. The main decisions are :

- 1- A coordination committee or Islamic organizations shall be established for each country to coordinate Islamic activities on the level of the giving country.
- 2 - A committee of representatives of different countries shall be established at the continental level, to coordinate Islamic activities on the level of Latin America.

3 - Muslim youth camps shall be held in each country as often as possible, preferably yearly.

4 - As the number of new Muslims is increasing fast, one organization shall be made responsible for their needs including arranging for higher studies in Islam and Arabic language in Muslim countries.

5 - Unorganized Muslim communities shall be identified and helped to organize.

6 - Each community shall have a mosque, a community center, a full-time primary and secondary Islamic school and an Imam.

7 - Translation of Islamic books shall be made in Spanish and Portuguese.

The IIFSO Secretary General, Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Sa'eed was right when he likened this conference in his inaugural speech to "the planting of a palm tree in the Continent".

Further, such conferences were convened yearly in different South American capitals. The last to date : the eighth, was held in Brasilia on 17-20/6/1994.

There are several focal points of Islamic growth in the Andean Region, which could be divided into external and internal ones. The external ones are three : New York City (USA), Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Islam is reaching the Andean marginalized groups (the Blacks, Indigenous people, the poor Whites) and the intellectuals more from New York City than from Arab countries. This influence is, interestingly enough a by-product of the overall American influence on all the American continent.

Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Buenos Aires (Argentina) have both many Islamic institutions and organizations interested in the welfare of Muslims all over South America. Due to the community of language

the influence of these two cities on the revival of Islam in South America is enormous.

The internal focal points are those Muslim communities within the Andean Region, which, through their dynamism and preeminence, become the examples followed by others. Interestingly, they are not located in the capital cities but they developed in the provinces instead, such as Santa Margarita in Venezuela and Micao in Colombia. Both communities are Lebanese in their majority.

In resume, Islam in the Andean Region, after a long period of decline, is witnessing an important rebirth at the local level in each Andean State. Some national federations uniting all Muslim organizations of a given country will start appearing in the 1990's along with continental Muslim organizations catering for the Muslim needs of all South America.

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CHAPTER XI
Islam in Argentina
Uruguay and Paraguay

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1. Introduction

The three republics, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, are located in the extreme south of south America. All of them use Spanish as official language. The region is dominated by Argentina in size and population as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay

Country	Area in km ²	Population in 1951	Population in 1991
Argentina	2,760,092	17,580,000	32,850,000
Paraguay	406,752	1,430,000	4,280,000
Uruguay	186,926	2,410,000	3,140,000
Total	3,353,770	21,420,000	40,270,000

The total area of the three states is above 3.35 million Km² with 82% belonging to Argentina 12% to Paraguay and 6% to Uruguay. The total population in 1991 was more than 40 million, with 81.1%

living in Argentina, 10.6% living in Paraguay and 7.8% in Uruguay. In 1951, the total population was 21.42 million, with 82.1 in Argentina, 6.7% in Paraguay and 11.2% in Uruguay. Thus, of the three states the population grows faster in Paraguay. The average population density in the region is about 12 inhabitants/Km². It is slightly higher in Uruguay and slightly lower in Paraguay.

Most of Argentina and Uruguay are flat plains extending from the Rio de la Plata to the Andes Mountains. In Uruguay, these plains give their place to hills of low altitude in the North. In Paraguay, the hilly east is crossed by large rivers such as the Paraguay, and the Paraná, forming the frontier with Brazil. The West of Paraguay is a plain covered with tropical forest and marshlands. The plains of Argentina rise slightly from East to West. They form three regions : the Gran Chaco in the North with its marsh and rain forests extending to Paraguay, the Pampa in the Center, which is the seat of most of the economy of the country, and Patagonia in the South with its poor soils, but good for raising cattle. The Western region of Argentina is formed by the foothills of the Andes Mountains which raise up to 6,909 meters above sea level at the frontier with Chile, in the highest peak in America. The climate is diversified as the region extends from 16 S to 55 S in latitude. The entire region is limited to the North by Bolivia, to the West by Chile, to the East by Brazil, and to the South by the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1516, the Spanish reached the mouth of Rio de la Plata, led by Admiral Juan Dias de Salinas. He named the River "La Plata" imagining that it is flowing with silver. The whole country was also named after silver "Argentina".

In 1536, another Spaniard, Pedro de Mendoza, came with 1,300 gold-seeking colonists and established the settlement of Buenos Aires. The new territories were conquered over local indigenous populations and added to the Spanish colony of Peru. It remained so until 1617 when it was constituted in a separate colony under the

name of Rio de la Plata. In 1776, as Buenos Aires became the seat of a Viceroy of Spain and the Colony of Rio de la Plata, it gained more importance. The territory included much of present-day Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia. After a long war against Spain, the colonists declared the colony independent in 1816. In 1818, the Spanish forces were completely defeated by the Argentinians led by Jose de San Martin, and the Republic of Argentina was recognized by Spain as an independent state.

Uruguay was conquered by Spain in the same time as Argentina. By 1680, the Portuguese expelled the Spaniards and added Uruguay to their territories of Brazil. In 1778, Spain expelled Portugal and conquered back Uruguay. But the people of Uruguay rebelled in 1811 and declared their independence. After five years they were invaded by the Portuguese. The latter were expelled with the help of Argentina in 1830. Uruguay remained ever since an independent republic. It is now divided into 19 administrative departments.

Spain tried to conquer the lands of Paraguay in 1526, but the Spanish Jesuits priests took over the region and established a theocracy. They were expelled in 1767 by Spain. In 1811, the people rebelled against Spanish colonization and declared the independence of the country as a republic. In 1864, a coalition between Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina declared a war against Paraguay in which half the population of the country perished. In 1932, Paraguay entered in war with Bolivia and came out victorious gaining large territories in the Chaco region. The country is divided now administratively into 19 departments.

The most widely spoken language of Paraguay is Guarani, spoken by about 88% of the population. Another 6% speak other Amerindian languages and only 6% speak Spanish only. Most of the people of Paraguay are indeed native Amerindians.

Agriculture and livestock raising on a large scale are the basis of the economy of the three countries. Because of its large territory,

Argentina is by far the richest country of the region. Mineral production is also important with gas, oil, coal, iron, silver as the main products. Small industries exist, especially in Argentina. Wood is also exploited.

The total number of Muslims in this region is about 510,000 people, or about 1.27% of the total population. They are more or less organized in 42 communities as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 : Muslims in Southern America

Country	Number of Muslims	Percentage of Muslims	Number of Muslim Communities
Argentina	500,000	1.52	35
Paraguay	8,000	0.19	2
Uruguay	2,000	0.06	5
Total	510,000	1.27	42

This author visited Argentina three times. First in December 1973, when he met with the leaders of the Muslim Community in Buenos Aires, Cordoba and Mendoza. He was a delegate of the Muslim World League (Mecca) for these communities. The second visit, in November 1986, was limited to Buenos Aires. The author participated in the Twelve Annual Meeting of OLADE on energy and took advantage to visit the Muslim Community. His third visit took place on August 1987 as a delegate of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to Argentina. The author visited the Muslim communities of Buenos Aires, Cordoba and Mendoza. These visits are reported in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 : Visits of Dr. Ali Kettani to Argentina

City	First Visit	Second Visit	Third Visit
Buenos Aires	25-28/12/1973	5-8/11/1986	24-26/8/1987
Cordoba	28-29/12/1973	-	26-27/8/1987
Mendoza	29-31/12/1973	-	27-29/8/1987

2 – Argentina : Country and People

In area, Argentina is the second largest country in South America, with a surface area of 2,760,092 km². It is located in the Southern hemisphere between latitude 22 S and 55 S. It is limited to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, Uruguay and Brazil, to the North by Paraguay and Bolivia, to the West and the South by Chile.

Argentina had a population of 32,850,000 in 1991, and 17,580,000 in 1951. In 1991, the country had a low population density of less than 12 persons/km². Most Argentinian people are of European origin, 45% of Italian origin, 30% of Spanish origin and 5% of other European stock. People of Arab (mainly Syrian and Lebanese) origin make up 10% of the population, whereas local Amerindians and Mestizos make up another 10%.

Geographically, Argentina is divided into four regions : the Andes Mountains in the West, the Gran Chaco plains in the North, the Pampa in the Center, and Patagonia in the South. The line of peaks of the Andes form the border of Argentina with Chile. The Gran Chaco, located between the Paraná and the Uruguay rivers, is made up of forest and marshes. The Pampa is the center of the Argentinian agriculture, whereas Patagonia has a poor soil and a cold climate.

The climate of Argentina is as varied as its geography. The North is characterized by a dry hot winter and a warm wet summer. The Pampa has a temperate winter and a hot summer, with rain falling all around the year. The Patagonia plateau is very cold in winter and dry and warm in summer. It is almost desertic because of low rain fall around the year.

Argentina has an agricultural area of more than 180 million hectares, and agriculture uses about 11% of the work force. In 1988, Argentina produced 7.7 million tons of wheat, 9.2 million tons of maize, 10 million tons of Soya beans, 3 million tons of sunflower seeds and 14.7 million tons of sugarcane.

Argentina is also an important producer of meat. In 1988, it has 51 million bovines, 30 million ovines and 3 million goats. Argentina also produces oil, coal, iron, silver. It has also some light industries.

Spanish is the official language and is spoken by almost all the inhabitants of Argentina. Most people are nominal Catholics. Muslims, Jews and Protestants are about half a million each.

The major cities of Argentina are the capital, Buenos Aires (3 million people), Cordoba (1 million), Rosario (1 million), Mendoza (600,000), and Tucuman (500,000).

Argentina is divided in 24 Autonomous Provinces, including the capital Federal District. These are usually grouped into five economic regions : the Littoral, the Centro, the Norte, the Andina and Patagonia. The population and surface areas of these regions are given in Table 2.1 for the census of 1989.

Table 2.1 : The Argentinian Regions

Region	area in km2	Population	Main City	Number of Muslims
Littoral	809,258	21,928,007	Buenos Aires	350,000
Centro	388,954	3,231,479	Cordoba	50,000
Norte	365,772	3,100,654	Tucuman	40,000
Andina	523,203	2,667,056	Mendoza	40,000
Patagonia	672,905	969,779	Rio Gallegos	20,000
Total	2,760,092	32,690,000	Buenos Aires	500,000

3 - Formation of the Muslim Community in Argentina

The first Muslim immigrants to the areas which came to form Argentina are the Moriscos of Spain who arrived in the Sixteenth century. Although Islam could not endure among these first Muslims, they certainly left a lasting impact on the country such as the Gaucho

tradition. Many Argentinians today claim Morisco origin, including many revert to Islam. In the Nineteenth century, Domingo Sarmiento, the Argentinian writer, exposed himself to the wrath of his then fanatic compatriots when he claimed descent from the Muslim Bani Al-Razin in Eastern Spain. Andalocian Islamic tradition has had great influence on many Argentinian writers.

Around 1880, immigration from Greater Syria to Argentina started as a result of the difficulties between the Druzes and the Maronites in Lebanon. This emigration lasted until 1955 and brought great numbers of Syrians and Lebanese to Argentina representing all the religious groups of Greater Syria. The numbers were such that today Argentinians of Arab origin are third in numbers after those of Italian and Spanish origins. The Syrian immigrants carried Ottoman passports and were thus called "Turcos" in a derogatory way. Most of the first immigrants were Christian.

Already in 1868, a Lebanese by the name of Habib Al-Nachabi lived in Buenos Aires. In 1890, the number of Arab immigrants all over Argentina was estimated at 400. Most of the first immigrants were poor and illiterate, working as roving salesmen. The most successful among them worked in agriculture. In 1902, they published the first Arabic paper called "As-Salam" (Peace).

The number of immigrants became much larger after the revolution of the Young Turcs in the Ottoman Empire in 1908. In that year, Mohammed Djinguiz estimated the number of Muslims in Argentina to be 7,520 persons, of which 7,020 were Sunnis (93%) and 500 (7%) were Shia. He said that all these Muslims were Ottomans from Syria with the exception of 20 Moroccans and "French" (Algerians).

In the report of the first Ottoman Consul General in Buenos Aires, Prince Amin Arsalam (a Lebanese Druze Muslim), the number of Ottoman (Syrian) immigrants in Argentina in 1912 was estimated to be around 95,000. Of these 76,000 (80%) were Christian, mainly

Orthodox, 14,000 (15%) were Muslim, mainly Sunnis, and 5,000 (5%) were Jewish.

Akram Zu'ayter, who visited Argentina in 1947, estimated the number of Argentinian Arabs to be around 300,000. This number seems to be a great underestimate. However, if one assumes the Muslims among them to be the double of their percentage in 1912, they would be in 1947 around 90,000. Because of widespread mixed marriages, the number of Argentinians of part Muslim origin could be estimated at present to be at least 500,000, or about 1.5% of the total population.

This Arab presence was greatly resented by many Argentinians and the immigrants were treated badly, especially Muslims. In fact the Argentinian law of 1876 helping immigrants settle in the country was never applied to Arab immigrants. In 1910, a member of the Argentinian parliament condemned Arab immigration and requested the Government to stop it. In 1928, immigration authorities requested the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to stop giving visas to Syrian (and Lebanese) applicants.

However, Syrian immigration to Argentina continued unabated until the Second World War. Afterwards, the establishment of the State of Israel led to a wave of new Palestinian immigrants of several thousands.

Since 1980, a great number of Argentinians of Spanish, Italian and other origins started to convert to Islam. They number at present several thousands. They established Muslim communities in Cordoba and Buenos Aires.

Muslim Syrians moved to Argentina for economic reasons, hoping to make some money as quick as possible and return back home. They fled their country to avoid poverty and military service as well. In spite of their illiteracy, they were attached to their traditions, their Arabic language and their Islamic faith and they tried their best to preserve them. However, they were subjected to suppression and

persecution. Their children were not allowed to have Muslim names and great pressure was put on them to become Christian.

Most Muslim immigrants came first to Buenos Aires and then moved to other Argentinian provinces. They used to meet in specific clubs and cafes to discuss events from home. As few women were with them, they started families by marrying non-Muslim local girls. They used to help Syria and Lebanon by sending money whenever a catastrophe befell them. Also, there was among them many writers and poets who through their Arabic writings they had an influence in all the Arab World as they defended the Arabs and Muslims causes.

In 1941, Prince Amin Arsalan organized the first "Arab Islamic Congress of Latin America" in Buenos Aires. He was greatly helped by another Muslim leader, Dr. Saifeddin Rahhal. The Congress elected Qasim Abdullah Al-Fadl as its Secretary General and produced a "Green Book" enouncing the support of the Muslims of Latin America to the independence of Arab countries. The Congress also elected Prince Chakib Arsalan as Honorary President.

Until very recently, these Muslims were highly assimilated. Very few among them speak Arabic and most of them have official non-Muslim first names and non-official Muslim ones. A great number of descendants of Muslims are no more Muslims today.

4 - Islam in the Littoral Region of Argentina

The Littoral Region is the core of Argentina. It is the home of two-third of its population and extends over 29% of its area. It is limited to the North by Paraguay and Brazil, to the East by Uruguay and the Atlantic Ocean, to the South by Patagonia and to the West by the Norte Region and the Centro Region. It includes the Federal Capital District of Buenos Aires and seven provinces as shown in Table 3.1. The Littoral Region is also the home of the largest number of Muslims

of Argentina, as about 350,000 of its total 500,000 Muslims live in this area (about 1.6% of total population of the Region).

Table 3.1 : The Littoral Region of Argentina in 1989

Province	area in km2	Population	Capital
Buenos Aires	307,571	12,604,018	La Plata
Federal District	200	2,900,794	Buenos Aires
Santa Fe	133,007	2,765,678	Santa Fe
Entre Ríos	78,781	1,005,885	Paraná
Chaco	99,633	824,447	Resistencia
Corrientes	88,199	748,834	Corrientes
Misiones	29,801	723,839	Posadas
Formosa	72,066	354,512	Formosa
Total	809,258	21,928,007	Buenos Aires

A - Federal District

The Federal District of Buenos Aires is the center of Islamic activity in Argentina.

In 1536, members of a Spanish gold-seeking expedition led by Pedro de Mendoza founded on the Rio de la Plata a settlement which they called "Santa María del Buen Aire". In 1541, the settlement was abandoned due to the attacks of local Amerindians. It was reestablished in 1580 by a Spanish expedition led by Juan de Garas who started from Paraguay,

In 1617, the first Spanish Governor was established in Buenos Aires and in 1620 the first bishop was installed. In 1776, Buenos Aires became the capital of the Vice-Royalty of the "Rio de la Plata". In 1862, Buenos Aires was declared Provisional National Capital of the Republic of Argentina (independent since 1816).

In 1880, it became Permanent Capital. The population of the town reached 16,000 in 1730, and 40,000 in 1800. It kept increasing reaching 187,000 in 1869 and almost 3 million in 1947.

Since the late 19th century, most Muslim immigrants to Argentina passed by Buenos Aires and settled there. Thus, about 200,000 Muslims live in Buenos Aires today. They established a multitude of Islamic associations.

In the beginning, most associations were cultural, rather than religious, grouping Arabs of one or all faiths. By the time Akram Zu'ayter visited Argentina on Sept 25 to November 28, 1947, he found seventeen of such Arab associations in Buenos Aires: the "Homs Club" headed by Ragheed Kilton ; the "Lebanese House"; the "Arab Argentinian Youth Club" ; the "Syro-Lebanese Club" called "Sharaf wa Watan" (Honor and Nation), headed by Musa Azizah; the "Arab Pact"; the "Yabroudi Association" ; the "Argentinian Arab Youth" ; the "Arab Congress" ; the "Arab Argentinian League" ; the "Alawite Union", the "Alawite League" ; the "Alawite Social Organization" ; the "Arab Islamic Solidarity" ; the "Islamic Union" ; the "Druze Welfare Society" ; and the "Arab Argentinian Cultural Union" headed by Qasem Ismail Tarmoush.

I - Centro Islamico (Islamic Center)

The Argentinian Arabs formed by the turn of the 20th century clubs and non-religious associations. However, World War I created serious divisions between Arab Muslims and Arab Christians as the former supported the Ottoman State while the latter supported the Western allies. Arab Christians went as far as to attack shops and homes owned by Muslims. This resulted in the mass movement of Arab Muslims to the Venezuela Township away from Arab Christians.

Consequently, Arab Muslims started to organize, for the first time, as a separate community. In 1918, under the impetus of Seifuddin Rahhal (Egyptian), the "Islamic Association" was established in Buenos Aires. In 1922, its name was changed to "Union Islamica" (UI) as to gather all Muslims including Druze and Alawites. In fact, this was the first Muslim association established in Latin America.

Akram Zu'ayter visited Buenos Aires from September 25 to November 19, 1947. On October 11, 1947, he was received by the "Union Islamica" led by its Honorary President, Seifuddin Rahhal, and its President, Ysuf Hajar (Lebanese). They gave full support to the Palestinian people and contributed in the formation of the "Association for the Support of Palestine".

The UI, which looked at itself as representing all the Muslims of Argentina, aimed at establishing an "Islamic Center" in Buenos Aires. In the 1940's, UI bought a piece of land in Avenida Rivadavia and put the cornerstone of the mosque in a solemn ceremony. However, as the Muslim Community was unable to build a mosque, and as they needed a center for their activities, they decided in 1954 to exchange the land with a house on the same street. The UI President was the late Mustafa Ali. They started calling the new house and the association the "Centro Islamico de la Republica Argentina" (CIRA).

In 1955, CIRA started raising funds for the support of the Algerian Revolution. They were visited by an Algerian delegation headed by Farhat Abbas. In 1956, they supported Egypt which was subjected to Franco-British aggression. This gave more cohesion to the Muslim community.

In 1957, The ministry of Awqaf of Egypt sent Sheikh Abdullah Hussein, the first Imam ever to CIRA ; He revived Islamic rituals in prayer, marriage and death, and established a school in the Islamic Center to teach Arabic and Islam. He also wrote a book on the life of the Prophet (saw) which was translated into Spanish. He remained with CIRA until 1961 ; CIRA remained without a trained Imam in the entire 1961-1972 period. In 1972, the Egyptian Ministry of Awqaf sent them Sheikh Ahmed Abu-al-Ula.

On 16/8/1958, the first Argentinian Islamic Congress was held at CIRA for the coordination of Islamic activities all across Argentina. On 30/6/1959, the Argentinian Government recognized CIRA as a religious organization representing all Argentinian Muslims. In 1967,

CIRA established an Islamic library with about 30,000 books, a gift of the United Arab Republic (Egypt).

In 1970, CIRA sold its Center in Rivadavia Avenue, and bought instead a larger house in Avenida San Juan, which became the new Islamic Center of Buenos Aires. It was in this Center that this author met for the first time the leaders of the Argentinian Muslim Community in the period 25-28/12/1973. Then, the CIRA President was Mohammed Mas'ud, an Argentinian-born Muslim of Lebanese parents.

In 1974, CIRA bought a piece of land on Independencia Avenue with funds received from Saudi Arabia for the purpose of building the Mosque and Islamic center. In 1979, CIRA started Islamic classes for children (more than one hundred at a time) run by the ladies of the Community.

Table 3.2 : CIRA Imams

Name	Date of function	Country of Origin	Sponsoring Arabia
Sayyid Abdullah Hussein	1957-1961	Egypt	Egypt
Ahmed Abu-Al-Ula	1972-1977	Egypt	Egypt
Abdafattah Ahmed Mustafa	1977	Egypt	Egypt
Irshad Ahmed Al-Azani	1977-1981	Pakistan	Saudi Arabia
Mahmud Siam	1981-present	Palestine.	Saudi Arabia

In 1981, the "Yabroudi Association" united with CIRA for the establishment of a Mosque Complex, thus giving more strength to the project. The Mosque Complex of Constitution Avenue was inaugurated in 1990. This is a major construction, including a mosque, a conference hall, a school, a sports center (including a swimming

pool), a restaurant, and offices. The funds were raised from Argentinian Muslims, Muslims overseas, and such countries as Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Iraq. It is the success of an effort that lasted more than fifty years. This author visited this Mosque Complex in August 1988.

In the period 1992-1994, the president of CIRA was Mohammed Mas'ud. He was succeeded by Sami El-Kadri (Lebanese origin). The CIRA Imams are reported in Table 3.2.

2 - The "Yabroudi Association (San Cristobal)

Yabroudi, a Syrian town, sent many emigrants to Buenos Aires, all Sunni Muslims. They settled in the Barrio of San Cristobal where they are now several thousands. In the 1940's, they formed the "Yabroudi Association" (YA) and established a full-time Arabic Primary School giving the official Argentinian curriculum and Arabic language.

They also built an important Community Central in San Cristobal where the second Islamic Argentinian Conference was held in 1958. In 1974, this building was bought over by the municipality for rezoning purposes. YA replaced it with a large piece of land in the same barrio with the purpose of building a Mosque Complex.

In 1981, YA decided to unite with CIRA and build the Complex mentioned above together. Thus, they succeeded jointly in making the dream of the Argentinian Muslims come true after so many years. One of the major teachers in the YA Arabic School was Ahmed Abboud. He was born in Lebanon around 1897 and emigrated with his parents to Argentina as a child. He was one of the most loved leaders of the Muslim Community. He also translated the meaning of the Qur'an in Spanish. YA was headed in 1947 by Yahya Layla, and in 1985 by Khalid Dib Qassab.

3 - The "Argentinian Arab Islamic Association" (Flores)

Muslims from Southern Lebanon, mostly Ja'fari Shi'a, settled in the Barrio of Flores. In 1960, they established the "Argentinian Arab Islamic Association" (AAIA) as a union of three smaller societies: the

"Arab Argentinian Youth Club", the "Arab Islamic Solidarity" and the "Arab Argentinian League". In 1972, AAIA established their Islamic Center in Flores with the help of the entire Argentinian Muslim Community.

It includes a full time "Arab Primary School" which was first named "Instituto Argentino Arabe". But when this author visited them in 1973, he advised them to add "Islamico" in the name and to introduce the teaching of Islam in the curriculum, which they did. The "Instituto Argentino Arabe Islamico" has now more than 300 children. In 1973, the director of the School was Dr. Justo Musa (a Muslim).

AAIA was also able to build its mosque with funds raised by Argentinian and overseas Muslims, mainly from Saudi Arabia and Iran, thus establishing the second Mosque Complex in Buenos Aires. In 1988, the AAIA President was Hamid Dib.

In 1960, AAIA requested, in the name of all the Muslims of Buenos Aires, from the municipality a piece of land to be used as a Muslim Cemetery. They were granted a 44,000 m² piece. A Cemetery Committee, headed by Ismael Fawaz (from AAIA), was established with representation from all Muslim societies.

4 - Fundation Da'wah Islamica

The Fundacion Da'wah Islamica was established recently in Buenos Aires for the purpose of propagating Islam to Muslims and non Muslims.

5 - Mezquita Al-Tauhid

Mezquita al-Tauhid was established in the Avenida San Nicolas (nº 674) of the capital.

6 - Mezquita Al-Ahmed

Mezquita al-Ahmed was established in Calle Alberti (no, 1549) in Buenos Aires.

7 - Jamiat sahabatul-Islam

The Sahbatul-Islam Association was established recently in Avenida Vidal (n° 1435 in the Capital).

8 - Movimiento Islamico Latino Americano

The Movimiento Islamico Latino Americano was established by young Muslims (including converts). Its center is in Calle Alberti (no. 1622) in Buenos Aires.

9 - the Islamico Alawite Union (Concepcion Arenal)

Several hundred Alawite families from Syria settled in the Barrio of concepcion Arenal and established in the 1930's the Islamic Alawite Union (IAU) and their center. IAU cooperates fully with the rest of the Muslims of Buenos Aires, including CIRA. In 1974, Argentina sent to Saudi Arabia a Muslim ambassador, Dr. Omar Bakir: Under the proposition of CIRA, he took Yassin Kamil Ghanim, then President of IAU, as administrative attache. The IAU President in 1985 was Juan Slaga.

10 - The Islamic Alawite Welfare Association (Jose Ingeniero)

Several hundred Alawite families from Syria settled in the Barrio of Jose Ingeniero. They established in the 1960's the Islamic Alawite Welfare Association which became active in the religious programs of CIRA along with the Sunnis. Among the leaders of this community are Ali Stambouli, Yusuf Mohammed Ali and Fajr Mohammed Ali.

11 The Islamic Alawite Union (Hidalgo)

Several hundred Alawite families settled in the Barrio of Hidalgo and established a chapter of IAU and a Center. Its president in 1985-86 was Daniel Al-Sayyid. This association is famous for its readers of Qur'an, sent usually to represent Argentina in overseas competitions.

12 - The Druze Association (Cabral)

The Druze established their own association and Center. To the difference of the Alawites, they are separated religiously from other Muslims. Their President in 1947 was Qablan Fakhreddin in 1947,

Amin Al-Attar in 1985, and Sheikh Saleh Kunj Abul-Saleh afterwards. Their Druze Sheikh-Aql is Sheikh Suleyman Saliqah.

B - Buenos Aires Province

The Province of Buenos Aires has the largest population among the Argentinian states. It is the home of about 100,000 Muslims. They formed associations in four towns : Canuelas, Rojas, Moron, Mar del Plata, Bahia Blanca and La Plata.

1 - Moron

Moron is an outer suburb of Buenos Aires, to the West, outside the Federal District border. It is the home of several thousands Arabs, including Muslims. They formed in the 1930's the "Arab Union in the West" which includes both Muslims and Christians. This organization has now limited activities, but its Muslim members started to perform their Islamic rituals in its Center. It is becoming more and more an Islamic Association.

2 - Rojas

Rojas is located in the west of the state of Buenos Aires, near Pergamino. It is the home of several thousand Muslims. In 1981, Ricardo (Mahmoud) Hussein established in this town the "Asociacion Para la Difusion del Islam en America" (The Association for the Diffusion of Islam in America), of which he is the director until today. The Association took over the "Center of Islamic Studies" established in 1973 for the purpose of inviting to Islam Argentinians including those of Muslim origin. Hussein was born in Argentina of Shia Muslim Lebanese parents. Since 1973, he runs a Muslim magazine called "Islam" in Spanish. The da'wa action of this Association includes "dhikr" sessions for spiritual uplifting.

3 - Canuelas

Canuelas is to the South-West of Buenos Aires. Many Argentinians converted to Islam, especially since the 1980's. Their number

increased greatly to reach the thousands. Those of Buenos Aires felt the need to establish an Islamic organization in their area of concentration. Thus, in 1988, they established the "Sociedad Argentina Islamica" (SAI) and opened their Islamic Center in Canuelas. Its first President was Jose (Ali) Cortez and its Secretary was Miguel (Tariq) Barcia. This association identifies with Andalucia and is very active in spreading Islam among young Argentinians.

4 - La Plata

La Plata is the capital of the Province of Buenos Aires. In the 1980's a section of the "Asociacion Para la Difusion del Islam" was established in this town.

5 - Mar del Plata

The Muslims of Mar del Plata are linked with CIRA, but their activities are limited.

6 - Bahia Blanca

There is a number of Muslims in Bahia Blanca who have limited activities.

7 - Ayacucho

Ayacucho is a small town to the North of Mar de la Plata where many Muslims settled. They formed in the 1940's the "Arab Union Association".

8 - Mercedes

Mercedes is a town to the West of Buenos Aires, the home of an old Muslim Community. They formed in the 1940's "The Arab Brotherhood Association".

C - Santa Fe

The Province of Santa Fe is located to the North of the Province of Buenos Aires, to the West of the Rio Parana. It is the home of about 30,000 Muslims scattered across the Province. They are organized in two cities : **Rosario** and **Santa Fe**.

I - Rosario

Rosario, founded in 1725, is located at 290 km to the North-West of Buenos Aires, on the west bank of the Panama River. In 1850, it became the port of entry of North Argentina. It is now a major trading and manufacturing center with about one million inhabitants.

Rosario is the home of several thousand Muslims of various sectarian origins, mostly from Lebanon and Syria. Most of those present now are born in Argentina and ignore the Arabic language. They established the "Islamic Union" association in the 1940's. It is made up mostly by Shia Muslims. Its president in 1985 was Ali Shayya (a Druze). This association established the Islamic Center of Rosario.

There is in this city a "Lebanese Association" and an "Alawite Association" as well. Furthermore, Rosario is the home of the Arab Argentinian poetess Nelda Sharrara daughter of Said Sharrara, originally from Bint-Jbail in Lebanon.

2 - Santa Fe

Santa Fe is the capital of the Province by the same name. In the 1980's a branch of the "Association Para la Difusion del Islam en America" was established in this city. It had also a "Syro-Lebanese Social Club".

D - Other Provinces

The other Provinces of the Littoral Region (Entre Rios, Chaco, Corrientes, Misiones and Formosa) have a total scattered Muslim population of about 20,000. They are not yet organized. Many of them are in a deep state of assimilation.

5 – Islam in The Centro Region of Argentina

The Centro (Central) Region is made up of three provinces, Cordoba, La Pampa and San Luis, totaling about 9.9% of the population of Argentina and 14.1% of its area. It is limited in the

North by the Norte Region, in the West by the Andina Region, in the South by the Pampa Region, and in the West by the Litoral Region. The areas and populations of these provinces in 1989 are shown in Table 5.1. The number of Muslims in this Region could be estimated at around 50,000 or about 1.5% of its total population.

Table 5.1 : The Centro Region of Argentina in 1989

Province	Area in km2	Population	Capital
Cordoba	168,766	2,748,006	Cordoba
San Luis	76,748	246,087	San Luis
La Pampa	143,440	237,386	Santa Rosa
Total	388,954	3,231,479	Cordoba

A - Cordoba Province

The Province of Cordoba is the core of the Centro. It is the home of about 40,000 Muslims and most of the Islamic institutions and organizations. These are all concentrated in the capital Cordoba.

Cordoba City is at 644 km to the North-West of Buenos Aires, on the slopes of Sierra de Cordoba. It is Argentina's leading industrial center, and with a population of over one million people, its second largest city. It was founded in 1573 and became in 1613 the seat of Argentina's oldest university. There are three Islamic associations in this city.

1 - Sociedad Arabe Musulmana

The Sociedad de Arabe Musulmana (SAM) was established in 1929 in Cordoba by the Muslim immigrants, mostly of Lebanese origin. This effort was due to the impetus of Ahmed Saleh who later returned to his native Damascus where he died. In the 1930's, SAM bought a house which it converted into an Islamic Center. In 1939, it established a Muslim Cemetery. In 1947, during the visit of Akram Zu'ayter, their President was Salim Al-Sawi. SAM tried to establish a

permanent Muslim school twice before 1973, but failed due to the unavailability of teachers of Arabic and Islam.

When this author visited SAM in 1973, he found them located in a small house in the town center. It included the association offices, a meeting hall and one classroom. The community had no mosque, no Imam and no school. There was no congregational prayers. Most of SAM's members were old men, including its president, Sobhi Al-It, son of Yusuf Rahmun Al-It, the then Honorary President and one of the first Muslim immigrants to Cordoba. This author got then the impression that this was a dying community. He called a meeting with their young who responded in great numbers. They spoke only Spanish, but they were eager to learn more about Islam and live by it if only they could find somebody to teach it them.

In 1974, SAM hired a young Imam, Sheikh Mouneef Sukkariyah, who was able to attract the young to the Center. In 1981, SAM hosted the Argentinian Islamic Council. Later on, SAM built a Mosque Complex, including a Mosque, a permanent Primary Islamic School and a Community Center.

When this author visited Cordoba in 1987, SAM was headed by Dr. Abdo Chayale. The Islamic Center was teaming with young people and children, although it was still under construction. Thus, SAM became infused with a dynamic new life.

2 - Comunidad de la Juventud Musulmana

The "Comunidad de la Juventud Musulmana" (Community of the Muslim Youth) was established in 1981 by young converts to Islam headed by Sheikh Carlos Alberto (Mohammed Abderrahman) Ciarla. Sheikh Ciarla did his Islamic studies at the Islamic University of Medina (Saudi Arabia). This community grew very fast to become almost as large as SAM. They have their own Islamic Center and they are active in teaching Islam to the young and the adults.

3 - Instituto Cultural Islamico

The "Instituto Cultural Islamico" was established in Cordoba in 1985. It built an Islamic Center, but its activity is limited.

B - San Luis Province

There are about 5,000 Muslims in the Province of San Luis, but they are not organized. They are dispersed in the province and are in danger of being completely assimilated.

C - La Pampa

There are about 5,000 Muslims in the Province of La Pampa, many of them living in the capital Santa Rosa where they established the "Asociacion Arabe de la Pampa" which has a limited Islamic activity.

6 - Islam in the Norte Region of Argentina

The Norte (North) Region includes four provinces, Tucuman, Salta, Santiago del Estero and Jujuy, totaling 9.5% of the population of Argentina and 13.3% of its area. This Region is limited to the North by Paraguay and Bolivia, to the West by Chile and the Andina Region, to the South by the Centro Region, and to the East by the Littoral Region. The areas and populations of these provinces are shown in Table 6.1 for 1989. About 40,000 Muslims (1.3% of the total population) live in this Region. They are in an advanced state of assimilation.

Table 6.1 : The Norte Region of Argentina in 1989

Province	Area in Km2	Population	Capital
Tucuman	22,524	1,134,309	San Miguel de Tucuman
Salta	154,775	822,378	Salta
Santiago del Estero	135,254	641,273	Santiago del Estero
Jujuy	53,219	502,694	San Salvador de Jujuy
Total	365,772	3,100,654	San Miguel de Tucuman

A - Tucuman

The Province of Tucuman is at the heart of the Norte Region. It is the home of about 20,000 Muslims, mostly Alawites. This is the only community of Argentina that was able to keep the Arabic language alive at home among the Argentinian-born generations. Most are concentrated in the capital San Miguel de Tucuman.

San Miguel de Tucuman, founded in 1565, is an industrial center on the Sali River, at the foot of the Sierra del Aconquija. It is located at 523 km to the North of Cordoba, and 1046 km to the North-West of Buenos Aires. The region is devoted to livestock ranching. In 1660, San Miguel de Tucuman was moved to its present location after a flood destroyed the first site. It was in this city that the independence of Argentina was declared on July 9, 1815.

Arabs of different religious traditions established themselves in Tucuman. They eventually established the multi-denominational "Syro-Lebanese Association".

Alawites from Northern Syria started to move to Tucuman since the turn of the 20th century. In 22/9/1929, they founded the "Alawite Islamic Union". This association does not have much Islamic activity, but it was very much present in the efforts to unite the Muslims of Argentina under one single umbrella. They all speak Arabic at home, a rare occurrence in Argentina. The association established an Islamic Center, including a conference hall, offices, and classrooms. However, Islamic rituals are not held regularly, although the CIRA Imam visits them regularly. It was in the Islamic Center of this organization that the meeting of the Islamic organizations of Argentina was held in 1981 to establish an Islamic Council. The President of this association in 1985 was Camilio Marul.

B - Salta

There are about 5,000 Muslims in the Province of Salta, mostly in its capital. They also have a weak organization, but with no center and having only few activities.

C - Jujuy

About 2,000 Muslims live scattered in the Province of Jujuy. They are not yet organized. Some Muslim families, such as the Guzmans, became leaders in this province.

7 - Islam in the Andina Region of Argentina

The Andina Region of Argentina is at the foothills of the Andes. It covers 19.0% of the area of Argentina and was the home of 8.2% of its population in 1989. It is limited to the North by the Norte Region, to the West by Chile, to the South by Patagonia, and to the East by the Centro Region. The Andina Region includes five provinces as shown in Table 7.1. It has a Muslim population of about 40,000 scattered in the different provinces (1.5% of total population), with a large number in Mendoza.

Table 7.1 : The Andina Region of Argentina in 1989

Province	Area in Km2	Population	Capital
Mendoza	148,827	1,387,914	Mendoza
San Juan	89,651	528,838	San Juan
Neuquen	94,078	326,313	Neuquen
Catamarca	100,967	232,523	Catamarca
La Rioja	89,680	191,468	La Rioja
Total	523,203	2,667,056	Mendoza

Mendoza is the largest province in the Andina Region, including more than half of its population. Half of its population is concentrated in its capital, Mendoza, as are most of its 20,000 Muslims.

I - Mendoza City

Mendoza City was settled by Spaniards from Chile in the 1560's. In 1817, it was used by General Jose de San Martin as a base for his crossing of the Andes to liberate Chile and Peru from Spain. In 1861, it was destroyed by an earthquake. Other earthquakes hit the city in 1974 and 1985.

Arab immigrants, including many Muslims, started to arrive in Mendoza since the turn of the 20th century. The Muslims are all Sunnis, many hailing from Deir Atia and Nabak, towns not too far from Damascus (Syria). In 1926, they established the "Arab Syrian Association", including Muslim and Christian Arabs. It became one of the most active Arab associations in Argentina.

Akram Zu'ayter visited Mendoza on 19-28/11/1947 to meet the Arab Community. He found three main societies. The first was the "Arab Syrian Association" mentioned above, it was headed by Mahmud Ghannum (a muslim). This association was overseeing the Arab Youth Club established by Arabs born in Argentina. The second association, the "Orthodox Union", headed by Tewfik Qaruani, was, as its name implies, Christian Greek Orthodox. The third association, the "Lebanese Union", headed by Yusuf Anton, was mostly Maronite Christian. The three associations jointly formed the "Committee for the Defense of Palestine" in Mendoza. The Muslims of Mendoza were by then influential and prosperous. Many were rich tradesmen. Others, such as Hussein Haddid and Mahmud Ghannum, owned large tracts of land.

By 1958, most Arab Christians established their churches and the "Arab Syrian Association" became made up in its majority by Muslims. Under the impetus of Jose (Yusuf) Taha, it changed its name to become the "Sociedad Arabe Islamica" (SAI, the "Arab Islamic

Society"). Then, the remaining Christians left the association to form the "Syrian Club".

Since then, SAI started to give classes of Arabic and Islam in its Islamic Center, beautifully located in the city center, in Avenida San Martin. When this writer visited them in 1973, the president of the association was Jose (Yusuf) Taha, the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Mendoza. However, SAI was made up by old people only, and its Center looked more of an "Old Boys" social club than an Islamic Center. There was no mosque, no school, no ladies, no youth, no children. One had the impression that the Muslim Community was heading for extinction.

An altogether different picture appeared to this author during his visit to Mendoza in 1987. The SAI President was Fouad Badawi, a rich landlord. The site of the old Center was rebuilt altogether in a full-fledged Mosque Complex including a large mosque, an Islamic school and a community center. Indeed, the Muslim Community took advantage of the destruction resulting from the two earthquakes in 1984 and 1985 to rebuild the center on more Islamic lines. SAI had also a young Syrian Imam, Sheikh Najam. SAI became animated by young Muslim men and women who brought their children to the School to learn Islam and Arabic. Most were third generation Argentinians. They knew no more Arabic, but their Islam was certainly stronger than that of their parents. Many of SAI members were revert or hailing from mixed parentage. SAI had a dynamic youth branch and a highly active ladies chapter. Friday congregational prayers are held regularly with more than one hundred Muslims taking part, as are daily prayers. Muslim holidays are celebrated with much color.

In 1979, SAI bought a piece of land where it established a Muslim cemetery. SAI also owns, in common with the Arab Greek Orthodox Community of Mendoza the "Argentinian Arab Club", an outstanding recreational facility at the outskirts of Mendoza, including restaurants,

sport facilities, and swimming pools. Its joint management by the two communities goes without problems.

The Muslim Community of Mendoza includes distinguished citizens, such as General Qahuayi, Lawyer Jose (Yusuf) Made, who was a candidate for the mayorship of Mendoza, Jose (Yusuf) Taha, and many others. It is now one of the most dynamic Muslim communities of Latin America.

2 - Las Heras

Las Heras is a small town to the North of Mendoza, not too far from it, where Muslims established an "Arab Islamic Association".

3 - San Martin

San Martin is to the east of Mendoza. It is the home of a Muslim Community originating from Deir-Atia Syria. In the 1940's this town elected as its mayor Mohamed Shorbai, a member of its Muslim Community.

4 - Tunuyan

Tunuyan is a small town to the south of Mendoza. It is the home of an Arab community including many Muslims. In the 1940's, they established the "Syro-Lebanese Association", headed in 1947 by George Oumma (a Christian).

5 - San Rafael

San Rafael is the second largest city of the Province of Mendoza, located in the South. It has a prosperous Muslim Community, which is at present in an advanced state of assimilation. However, it started showing signs of renaissance among its young generation. In the 1940's it had two Arab associations, The "Syrian Arab Association", headed in 1947 by Fayed Ayyub (a Muslim), and the "Syro-Lebanese Association", headed in 1947 by As'ad Mudauarah (a Muslim). One of the leading citizens of San Rafael was Mustafa Sa'd, a Muslim who gifted the municipality a large tract of land. The city named in his honor one of the most important avenues "Avenida Siria". Other

distinguished Muslims of San Rafael were Mohammed Made, Khalid Shamma, Abdelkader Bahbuh, among many others.

B - San Juan

The Province of San Juan is to the North of the Province of Mendoza. It is a mountainous region. It has a Muslim population of about 5,000 dispersed in the Province, with a good number in the capital San Juan, where they have a poorly organized community.

C - Neuquen

The Province of Neuquen is to the South of the Province of Mendoza. It has a Muslim population of about 5,000, dispersed in the Province. Its capital, Neuquen, is located on the border with the Province of Rio Negro. It is the home of many Muslim families, including some very prosperous ones, such as the family Sapag.

D - Catamarca

The Province of Catamarca is the northern most of the provinces of the Andina Region. It has a Muslim population of about 4,000. They are not organized. Some of the Muslim families, such as the Saadis, are among the upper classes of the Province.

E - La Rioja

The Province of La Rioja is to the North of the Province of San Juan. It has a Muslim population of about 5,000 who are in an advanced state of religious assimilation in the Christian Catholic majority. Many of these Muslims hail from Yabroud in Syria. They are not organized.

Some Muslim families became very influential, such as the Menem family. Su'ud Men'em emigrated from Yabroud to Argentina in 1911. In 1929, he married there Maheebah 'Aqeel, hailing also from Yabroud. They had three boys : Carlos, born in Anillaco in 1930, Eduardo and Muneer. Carlos studied law at the University of Cordoba (Argentina) and converted there to Catholicism. He became active in politics, was elected Governor of La Rioja Province, and then

President of Argentina in 1989 and reelected for a second term in 1995. The Argentinian law makes it a condition to be Catholic to be elected to the post of President of the Republic. Eduardo Men'em became the President of the Argentinian Congress. Muneer Men'em was ambassador of Argentina in Syria, and is now the Secretary General of the Argentinian Presidential Palace. The wife of Carlos, Selma, is also a Muslim. His Children are also Muslim, and when his son, Carlos Facundo, tragically died in an air crash on 15/3/1995 at the age of 26, he was buried Islamically in the Muslim cemetery of San Justo in the Province of Buenos Aires.

8 - Islam in Patagonia in Argentina

Patagonia is the southern most Region of Argentina. It covers 24.4% of the area of Argentina but is the home of only 3% of its population. It is limited to the North by the Littoral, the Centro and the Andina regions, to the West and the South by Chile, and to the East by the Atlantic Ocean. It includes four provinces : Rio Negro, Chubut, Santa Cruz, and Tierra del Fuego, as shown in Table 8.1. About 20,000 Muslims live scattered in this vast area forming about 2% of its total population.

Table 8.1 : Patagonia in 1989

Province	area in Km2	population	capital
Rio Negro	203,013	466,713	Viedma
Chubut	224,686	327,780	Rawson
Santa Cruz	243,943	147,928	Rio Gallegos
Tierra del Fuego	21,263	27,358	Ushuaia
Total	672,905	969,779	Viedma

There is not a simple Muslim organization in Patagonia. However, Viedma is marqued to be the new capital of Argentina and land has already been put aside for its mosque.

9- Challenges and Opportunities for Islam in Argentina

Until 1981, CIRA acted as the coordinating body of all Argentinian Muslim organizations, including Sunnis, Shias, Alawites and Druze. Indeed, sectarian divides, while strong in the countries of origin, become much weakers in the land of immigration. These associations elected representatives on the Board of CIRA.

Since 1980, Argentinian Muslims started thinking about establishing a "Consejo Superior Islamico de la Republic Argentina" (CSIRA, "Higher Islamic Council of the Republic of Argentina"). Representatives of different organizations held preparatory meetings in Cordoba, Mendoza, Tucuman and Rosario. CSIRA was finally established in a meeting held in Rosario in 1981. They elected Engineer Mohamed Hajar (from CIRA) as General Secretary, and Engineer Abdel-Kareem (from the "Sociedade Arabe Musulmana" of Cordoba) and Jameel Badaui (from the "Sociedade Arabe Islamica" of Mendoza), as two Assistant General Secretaries. The CSIRA Charter set its main aims to promote Islam and Muslim unity in Argentina, to organize non-organized Muslim communities, and to spread Islamic education and Arabic language.

First, CSIRA started functioning from the CIRA headquarters in Buenos Aires, as CIRA gave the necessary facilities to CSIRA, including rooms and secretarial help. Later, CSIRA established its own headquarters in Calle Cangallo in Buenos Aires. Since then it remained highly active in uniting the Muslims of Argentina.

On nagging problem of Argentinian Muslims was the necessity by law to give "Argentinian", i.e. Christian, names to their children. This created in them a double personality, as they started using an official

Christian name outside home, and non-official Muslim name in the family and the Muslim Community. Furthermore, a strong feeling of suppression was permeating the Muslim Community as it grew more aware of its Islamic identity. The newer generations of Christian name-carrying Argentinian-born Spanish-speaking Muslims could not accept any more this situation. Their continuous demand for legalization of Muslim names through CIRA eventually bore fruits in 1981, when 25 Muslim first names were legalized and considered "Argentinian". Obviously, this solution was not satisfactory as the number was too small. However, later more Muslim first names were added and accepted. Thus, this problem has become a story of the past.

Now, the greatest priority of the Muslim Community is to Islamize the growing generations of Muslims and give more attention to the youth. Thus, the idea of organizing regularly Muslim Youth Camps was mooted. The first such camps was held in 1983 in the region of Cordoba. More than one hundred young boys and girls took part in it. They came from all the provinces of Argentina. The camp received the support of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY, Saudi Arabia) with teachers coming from the Arab World and Brazil. For more than two weeks, the youth lived a full Islamic life and received intensive Islamic education along with sports and cultural activities in beautiful surroundings.

When the second Islamic Youth Camp was held in 1984 in the Province of Buenos Aires, 150 Muslim youth took part. Then, Islamic Youth Camps became a real success, and a continuous feature of Islamic activity in Argentina. Some are international, bringing in youth from all Latin America. Others are national for Argentinian youth coming from all over Argentina. Yet others are provincial, organized by the local organization of a given province.

Many young Muslims who took part in Islamic Youth Camps grew to become leaders of Muslim institutions, thus facilitating a smooth

transition of leadership to new generations. Also, Islamic festivities became more visible, especially in barrios of high Muslim presence. Special care is given to the Maulid (birthday of the Prophet (saw)), the New Hijri year, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha. During the month of Ramadhan, the Islamic centers are particularly active with religious and social life as families bring in their food for a common iftar at sunset, then pray together, or just be happy to be together as Muslims. Eid-ul-Fitr may be the most celebrated Muslim Eid in Argentina, as Muslims become more generous and loving to the poor members of their community.

In general, the Muslim Community in Argentina is economically prosperous. Most Muslims work in trade and agriculture. Many became famous in industry, the military or the government. Several became governors of provinces, many are deputies at the National or the Provincial assemblies.

Muslims are completely integrated in the Argentinian society. They look physically like everybody else, they speak Spanish and they mix freely with the population at large. They are not treated differently. They are Argentinian by birth, feeling and law. This situation, a success of the community in a way, was leading in the same time to its doom as a Muslim Community. However, since the 1970's occurred a complete metamorphosis of the community from a "dying old outside-looking Arab Muslim community" into a "dynamic young Argentinian Muslim community".

From the start, Muslims in Argentina tried to give their community the means to be viable. One of these means is the establishment of an Islamic press. After World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, its ambassador in Argentina, the Lebanese Druze, Prince Ameen Arsalan, remained in the country and became one of the loved leaders of the Muslim Community. In 1925, he established the paper "Al-Istiqlal" (Independence) in Arabic which became the mouthpiece of the Muslim Community. It was later

directed by Sheikh Saleh Kunj Abu-Saleh, another Lebanese Druze. The paper promoted Muslim unity, fought sectarianism and defended the Islamic rights of women. It was widely read by Argentinian Muslims.

In 1929, Yusuf Aziza established "Al-Jareedah Al-Suriyah Al-Lubnaniyah" (The Syrian-Lebanese Journal). It became famous with the writings of Dr Seifeddin Rahhal, a medical doctor of Egyptian origin, who translated the meaning of the Qur'an into Spanish with the help of the Argentinian Arabist Dr. Santilla Goberalta. Rahhal died at an age of over 100. He was a great Argentinian Muslim who, with his writings and his personality, defended the Muslim cause all his life.

In 1934, Abdullatif El-Kheshen established "Jareedat Al-Alam Al-Arabi" (Journal of the Arab World) which became the lasting mouthpiece of the Argentinian Muslim Community to this day. In 1935, Dr. Seifeddin Rahhal established his own journal called "Al-Fitrah Al-Islamiyah" (Islamic Nature).

Other journals followed in a quick pace : "Sawt Al Haqq" (the Voice of Truth) in 1955, established by Mustafa Yahya ; "Sawt Al-Majlis" (The Voice of the Council), produced since 1958 by the "Arab Federal Council" ; "Al-Mawahib" (Gifts) established by Yusuf Sarmi ; "Al-Rafeeq" (Comrade), established by Yusuf Kamal ; "Al-Watan" (the Nation), established by Abdul-Latif Al-Yunes. All these papers are defunct now with the exception of "Jareedat Al-Alam Al-Arabi" which survived in Arabic and Spanish.

Many leaders of the Argentinian Muslim Community, since the turn of the 20th century, are remembered today with great respect and affection. Besides Prince Ameen Arsalan and Dr Seifeddin Rahhal mentioned before, one should also mention Khaled Adeeb Abd'ul-Wahed, of Lebanese origin. His writings in Spanish, French and English defended continuously Muslim causes. He was one of the founding members of the committee for the construction of the Buenos Aires Mosque. He also translated to Spanish the book on "The

Prophet Mohammed (saw)" written by Sheikh Abdullah Hussein. He taught Arabic to generations of Buenos Aires. Muslims and many Argentinians embraced Islam through him. He died by the end of 1984.

Another Argentinian-born Muslim leader was the late Ibrahim Hussein Hajar. He was a prosperous businessman of Argentinian origin and a prolific writer since 1939. He wrote many books in Spanish on Muslims in Spain and South America. His son, Engineer Mohamed Hajar, is the CSIRA General Secretary.

Ahmed Abboud, born around 1895, came to Argentina with his parents as a child. He spent his life teaching the Arabic language in different "Clubs" as a voluntary and giving lectures on Islam. He also translated the meaning of the Qur'an in Spanish, with the help of Dr. Rafael Castellano. This translation is accepted today by Islamic centers across South America.

The senior leaders of the Muslim Community who are still living are Jose (Yusuf) Taha, Mohamed Mas'ud, Khalid Kadri, Dr. Camelio (Ali) Ibrabim, Abdullah Dessouqui, Sami Ali Kadri, Qasim Abdullah Al-Fadly, Ricardo (Mahmud) Hussein, among many others.

The Argentinian Muslim Community is well respected in the country, as Argentinian Muslims are law-abiding hard working citizens. Their level of education is higher than the national average, and their social status is also higher. The different Argentinian governments, whether military or democratic, always seek the views of the Argentinian Muslim Community through its leaders as they do with other religious groups, in all major matters concerning the Nation. They present their congratulations personally to Muslims in major Muslim festivities, by coming to the Islamic centers. In all, Argentinian Muslims do not feel at present oppressed in any way.

However, among the major problems facing the Argentinian Muslim Community in the future is the potential rebirth of sectarianism. Muslims in Argentina are in their greatest majority

originary from Greater Syria, although an increasing number are converts or children of converts of Spanish or Italian origin. Therefore, all the major sects of Greater Syria are represented in this community. Until the 1980's, sectarian differences tended to disappear, but some sectarian reassessment is starting to emerge due to outside influences. Although the forces of Muslim unity are still much stronger than those of division, this problem has to be managed in the future.

10 - Argentina Conclusions

Muslims faced serious challenges to their existence since they became present in Argentina in large numbers on the turn of the 20th century. The circumstances of emigration were such that they felt more eager to safeguard their Arabic unity in the land of immigration than their religious one. Indeed, Arab immigrants from Greater Syria represented all Syrian religious groups including Muslims, Muslim sects, Christian sects, and Jews. The achievement of Arab unity was at the expense of Islamic self-assessment. The first organizations were social rather than religious. The losers in this situation were the Muslims. As they lived in an overwhelmingly Christian country, there was no danger for the children of the Arab Christians to lose their faith, but the danger for the Muslim children was real in the absence of Islamic institutions.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the abolition of the Caliphate created opposing feelings between Christian and Muslim Arabs leading to the formation of the first Islamic organization in Buenos Aires in 1918: the "Union Islamica". It concentrated on gathering the Muslims under one umbrella wherever they may be and to whatever sect they may belong, thus the word "Union", although the leadership was overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim. More Muslim associations were later established in different

provinces after World War II. The establishment of the State of Israel led to a complete divorce with the Syrian Jewish Community of Argentina.

This Islamic organization was weak as it concentrated on the social aspects of the Muslim community as well as the political problems of the Arab World. In a way, it neglected the Islamic education of the growing generations of Muslim children born in Argentina. With time, and due to widespread mixed marriages, the Muslim Community was losing its children to the Catholic faith at a great pace. An example is the present President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, another is General Mohammed-Ali Zainaddin, the Argentinian hero of the Malvinas War, who is, in spite of the name, a staunch Catholic. Less famous examples could be counted by the tens of thousands.

By the 1970's, the Argentinian Muslim Community was looking as if it were living its last decades. The leadership was aging, and the transition to the next Argentinian-born generations looked difficult, as few of the youth seemed interested in Islam.

However, since then, the change has been sudden and unexpected. Those same generations, which seemed to be lost to Islam, returned en masse, taking over the Islamic institutions, giving them a new impetus and concentrating on education of Islam and Arabic. Moreover, non-Muslim youth, with no Muslim background, started to convert to Islam in great numbers. As an example, in the Islamic Center of Buenos Aires, 22 people converted to Islam in the month of Ramadhan of 1988 alone. The number of converts could be estimated now to be around 10,000, and it is increasing fast. Some, such as Sheikh Mohamed Ciarrla in Cordoba and Sheikh Ahmed Monguzzi in Buenos Aires, trained as Imams in Islamic universities in Arab countries. Now, there are Muslim communities established by converts in both Cordoba and Buenos Aires. Thus, out of a dying Arab Muslim community was born a dynamic Argentinian Muslim Community.

Since the 1980's, Muslims became more systematically organized in Argentina, i.e., including in the religious, the educational, and the cultural fields. The old "Clubs" are giving way to "Mosque Complexes" similar to those of Brazil, including the mosque, the full-time Islamic school, the social facilities, the offices, etc... There are now five such complexes in Argentina : 2 in Buenos Aires, 2 in Cordoba and 1 in Mendoza.

Another trend is the Islamization of secular Arab organizations having Muslim majorities. The pace started in 1958 by the "Sociedade Arabe Islamica" of Mendoza and continues today. The number of Muslim organizations by province is reported in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1: Number of Muslim Organizations in Argentina in 1994

Province	Number
Federal District of B.A.	13
Buenos Aires	8
Mendoza	5
Cordoba	3
Santa Fe	2
Tucuman	1
Santiago del Estero	1
Salta	1
La Pampa	1
Total	35

The Argentinian Muslim Community entered the 1990's in a state of dynamic growth. At present, more Muslim communities are being established and more Mosque Complexes are being planned. However, the Muslim Community is facing the problem of Imams. At

present, it served by 10 Imams coming from Muslim countries. While their number is too small to serve the Community, their achievement is not important as it should be, as most of them ignore Spanish while most Muslims do not speak Arabic. Thus, CIRA is planning to establish in Buenos Aires an Imam Institute to form local Imams in numbers sufficient to serve the increasing demand.

Another problem is the need of Islamic literature in Spanish. In this respect, CIRA is also planning to establish of an Islamic printing house to serve Islam in Argentina. Furthermore, more attention is being given to Muslim youth and children, and more full-time Islamic schools are planned.

Thus, Buenos Aires is becoming for sure an important center of Islamic radiation in Latin America. It is certainly the capital of Islam in Hispanic America.

11 - Islam in Uruguay

Muslims arrived to Uruguay in several waves, starting from the 19th Century. Most came of Greater Syria, some from Egypt and Iran. By 1950, the old immigration practically disintegrated as no Islamic associations or institutions were established. However, Uruguay has a population of about 40,000 ethnic Arabs, mostly Christian. In 1947, they formed in Montevideo, a "Committee for the Defense of Palestine". Its President was George Shami, and its Secretary was Alberto Abdallah.

The new immigration, mostly from Palestine, starting after 1950, gave a new life to the Muslim presence in Uruguay. At present, Muslims are located mostly in the capital, Montevideo, and along the borders with Brazil, especially in Rivera, Vergara, Cabo Chui, and Rio Branco. The number of Muslims of Uruguay could be estimated today at about 2,000 Muslim. Most of them live from trade, many right on the border with Brazil.

A) Montevideo :

It is claimed that the name of Montevideo comes from the exclamation of a Portuguese sailor when he saw from the sea a 150 meter high hill : "Monte vide eu !" (I saw a hill). It was actually founded in 1726 by Bruno Mauricio de Zabala, the Spanish Governor of Buenos Aires. In 1807, it was occupied briefly by British forces. By 1860, its population rose to 58,000 to 164,000 in 1884, and about 1,300,000 people at present.

About 1,000 Muslims live in Montevideo, Sunni Arabs in majority. They organized themselves in a "Islamic Society of Uruguay" and, with the help of the Egyptian ambassador, were able to establish an "Islamic Center". In the late 1980's, a local businessman built a night-club in the form of an Ottoman-style mosque. After complaints from the Muslim Community, the Government took over the building and converted it into a museum. The hope of the Muslim Community is to establish a properly built Mosque Complex, including a Mosque and a full-time Islamic school, in Montevideo.

The Muslim Shias of Montivedeo established a separate Islamic Association and their own Islamic Center.

Furthermore, many Uruguayan converts to Islam through Sufi orders, organized themselves in the capital separately under the name of "Islamic Brotherhood Association".

B) Cabo Chui:

Chui is a small border town on the Atlantic Coast, near the Brazilian town of Chuy on the other side of the border, in the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Several hundreds Palestinians settled in this town and opened shops. They established in the 1980's the "Islamic Society of Cabo Chui" and opened an "Islamic Center" in the town.

C) Rivera :

Rivera is a border town in Uruguay facing Santana do Lovamento in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. Several hundreds Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims settled in this town. They established an "Islamic Community of Rivera" with its own Islamic center.

D) Rio Branco :

Rio Branco is the third border town with Brazil which has a Muslim presence. It faces Jaguarao in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. Its Muslims are trying to organize in a Muslim community.

E) Vergara :

Vergara is a small town at about 80 km from Rio Branco, on the road to Montevideo. It is the home of a small Muslim community.

12 - Islam in Paraguay

Muslim immigration to Paraguay, started during the last century. Most came from Greater Syria. However, Muslims, in spite of their relatively large numbers, never bothered to organize themselves or establish Islamic institutions in Paraguay.

There are now about 8,000 Muslims in Paraguay scattered in all the country. They are divided between an old immigration from Syria and Lebanon, which is in a deep state of assimilation, and a newer immigration from Lebanon, Palestine, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Today, there are three main areas of Muslim concentration : Asuncion, Puerto Stroessner, on the border with Brazil, and San Pedro on the River Paraguay.

I – Asuncion :

Asuncion stands on a low hill rising from a bay of the Paraguay River, facing Argentina. It is located at 1,000 km to the North of

Buenos Aires. It was founded in 1537 as "Nuestra Senora de la Asuncion". It has now a population of about 800,000.

Moriscos from Spain did arrive to Asuncion in the 16th Century and were completely assimilated. However, poor sections of Asuncion still have houses showing the Moorish style.

Immigration from Greater Syria to Asuncion started in the second half of the 19th century. Most of the immigrants were Christian Arabs and some were Muslims. In the 1930's, they established a "Syrian Club" including Muslims and Christian. The "Club" was headed in 1947 by Luis Solomon. It is still active today in teaching Arabic to those who wish to learn it.

In 1990, the Muslims established in Asuncion the "Islamic Center of Paraguay". Their Imam is Sheikh Hassan Mohammed Ajaj. Since its inception, Friday and other congregational prayers became regular in the Center, as well as public lectures on Islam. The Center started also a program of da'wa in prisons. The Islamic school attached the Center gives classes of Arabic, Qur'an and Islam. The Center also organizes a yearly book exhibition, and distributes Islamic books to libraries in the universities and secondary schools. Many dozens of Paraguayans converted to Islam in this Center.

2 - Presidente Stroessner

Presidente Stroessner (population of 200,000) is a port city on the Parana River on the border with Brazil. It is the second largest city of Paraguay and the capital of the Department of Alto Parana. As a free port, it attracted a large number of Muslim immigrants from Lebanon, Palestine, Pakistan and Bangladesh. They work in trade and have a close relationship with the Muslims of the Parana State in Brazil.

In the 1980's, a group of Muslims of Presidente Stroessner established a Muslim organization called "Mezquita del Tauba", the first in Paraguay. They rented a large hall on Avenida M. Rodriguez and planned for the establishment of a Mosque Complex, including a mosque, a permanent Islamic school and a community center, similar

to those of nearby Parana State in Brazil. They got the help of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) from Saudi Arabia, who send then an Imam, Sheikh Khalid Rizq Taqieddin. As soon as he arrived, he started Islamic activities in the center, including the Friday and daily prayers as well as classes of Islam and Arabic to the young and the adults. He also established an Islamic library with books, audio, and video cassettes.

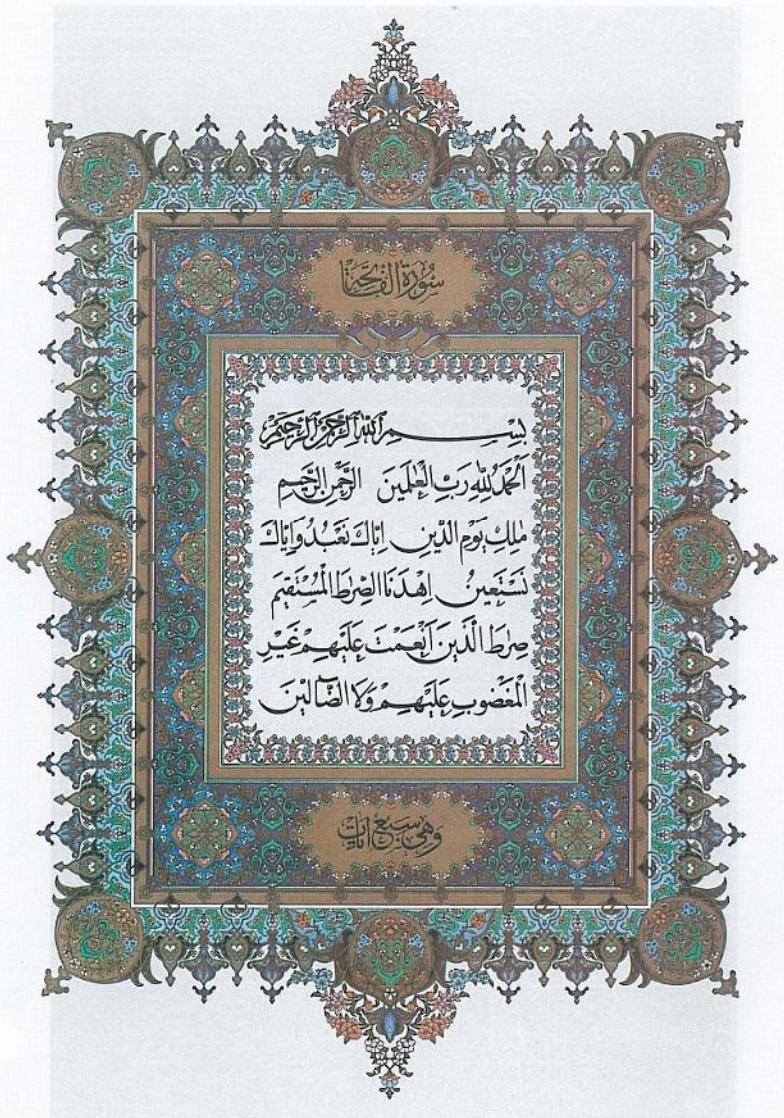
The Muslims of Presidente Stroessner thus set the pace for an Islamic revival in Paraguay

3 - San Pedro

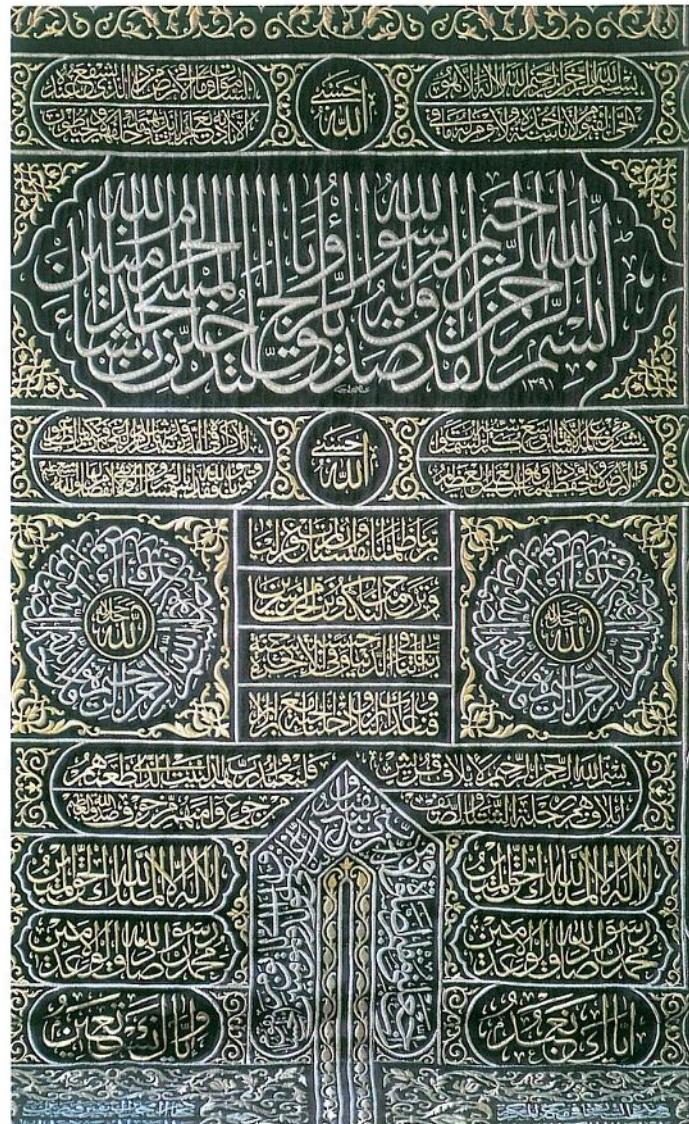
San Pedro is a small town on the Paraguay River to the North of Asuncion. It is the capital of the San Pedro Department. It has a Muslim population which is not yet organized.

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P1. N° I - The Koran. The Al-Fâtiha.



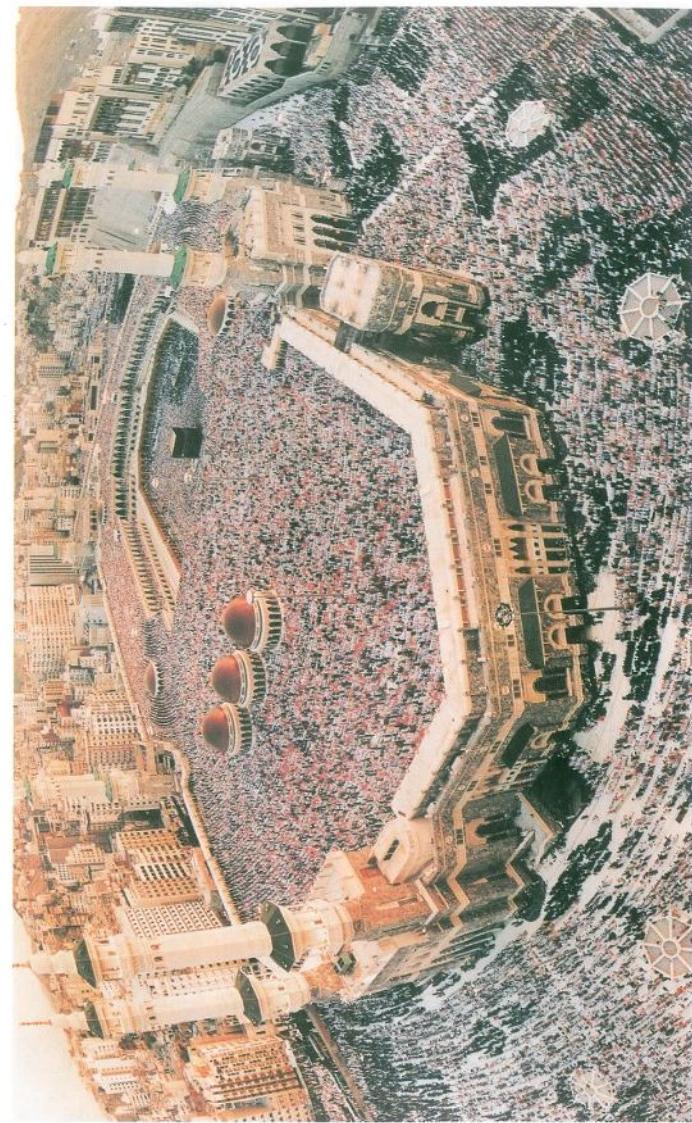
P1. N° II - Koran's verses embroidered with gold and silver threads on the Kaaba's Kiswa in Mecca (*Publication of the Ministry of Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*).



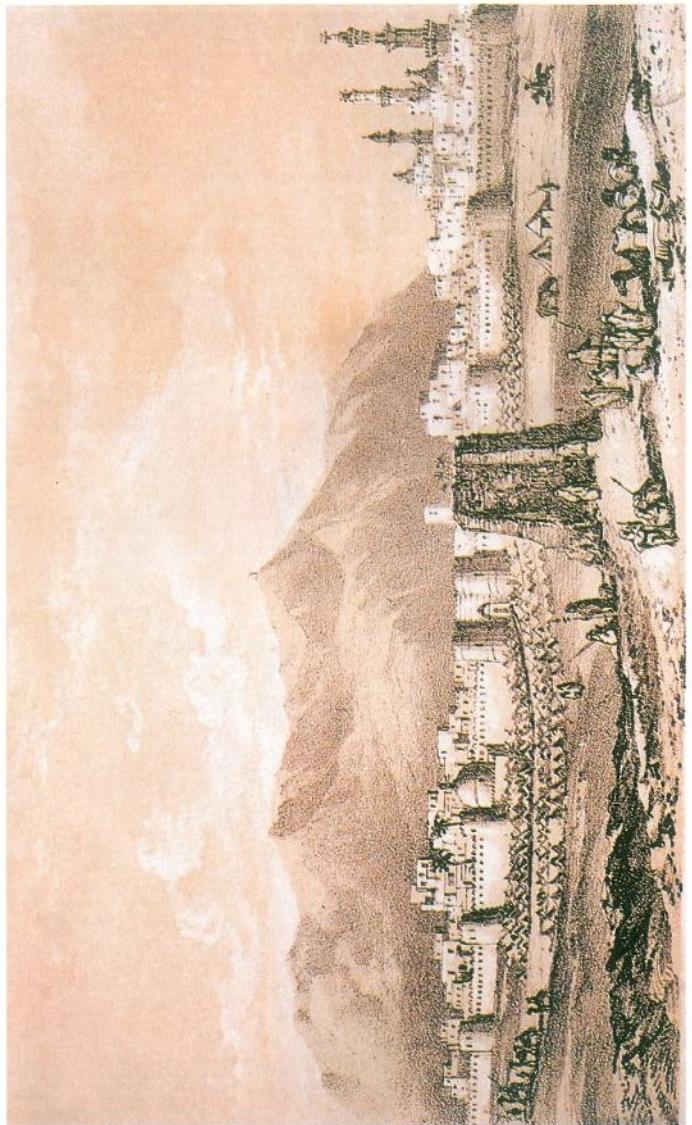
P1. N° III - The door of the Kaaba in Mecca (*Publication of the Ministry of Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*).



Pl. N° IV - A Koran text drawn by the Arab calligraphist Ibn Al-Bawab.
(391 H - 1000 J.C.). (Private collection).



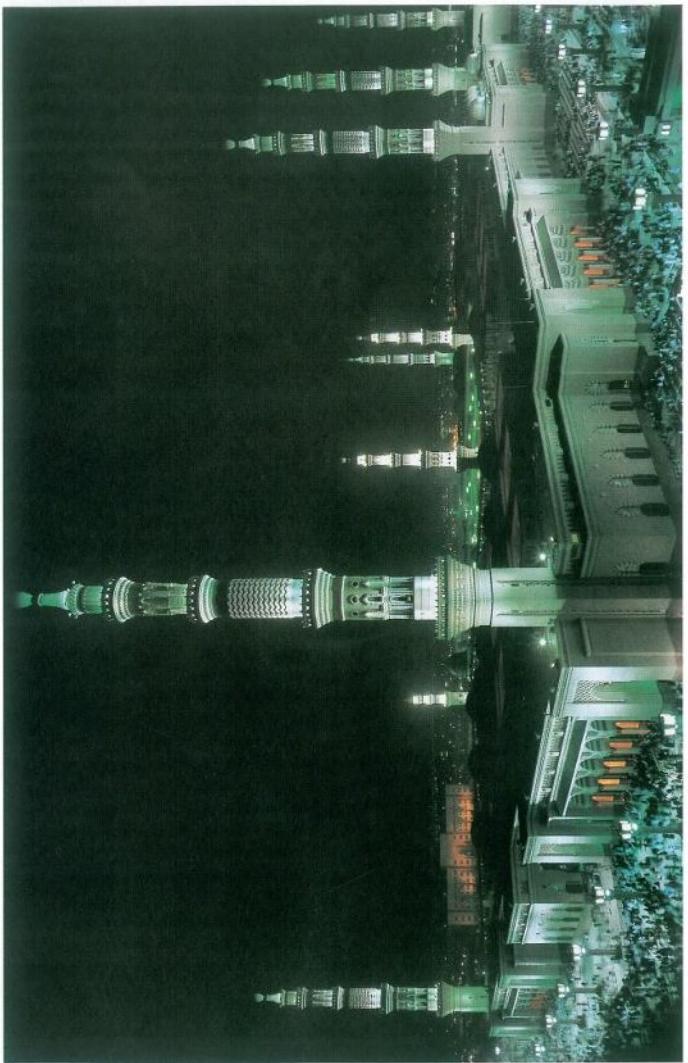
Pl. N° V - The pilgrimage to Mecca. View of the Kaaba.
(Publication of the Ministry of Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).



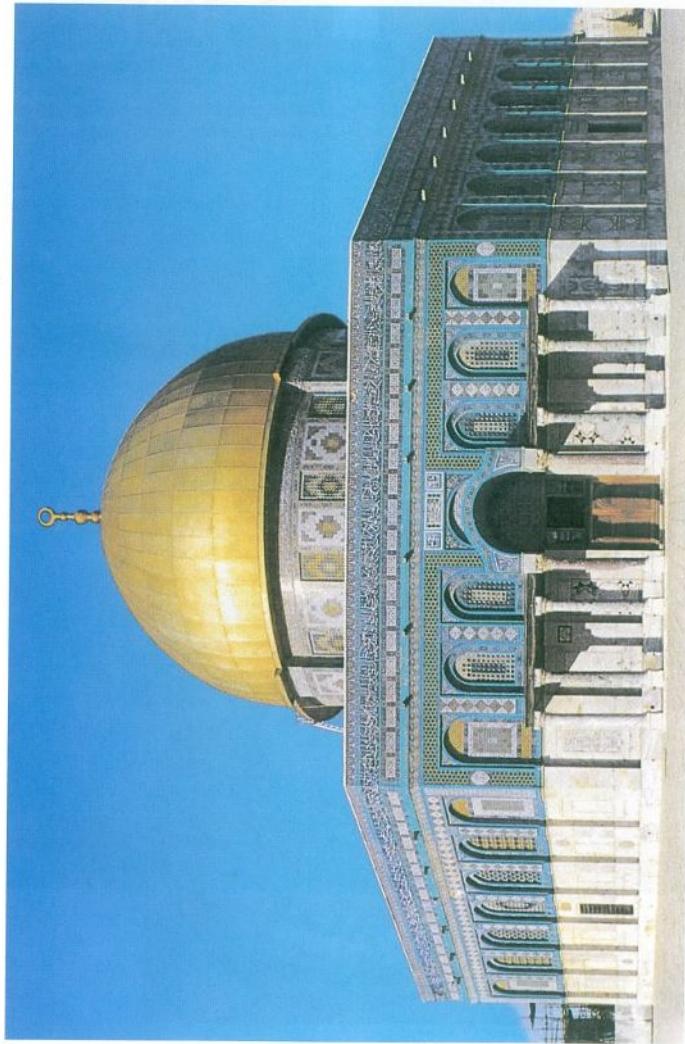
P1. N° VI - The Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, 1885.
(From Richard Burton).



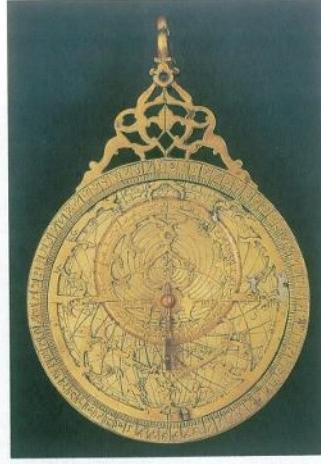
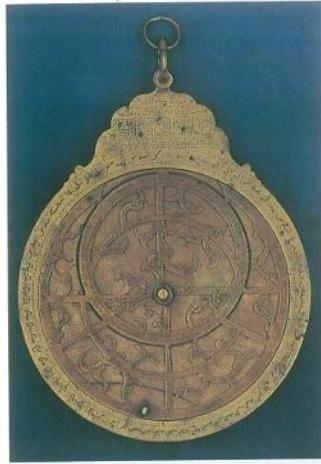
P1. N° VII - The tomb of the Prophet in Medina (Publ. of the Arab World Institute in Paris. *Al-Haramān Ach-Chariṭān. Muqaddasat wa Miṣnār*. 1988).



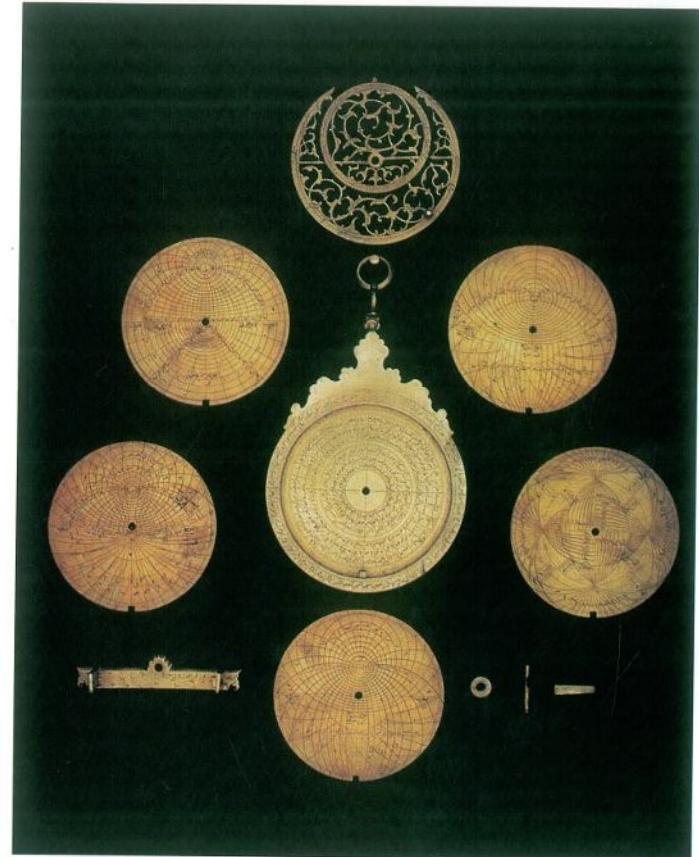
P1. N° VIII - The Mosque of the Prophet in Medina (*Publication of the Ministry of Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*).



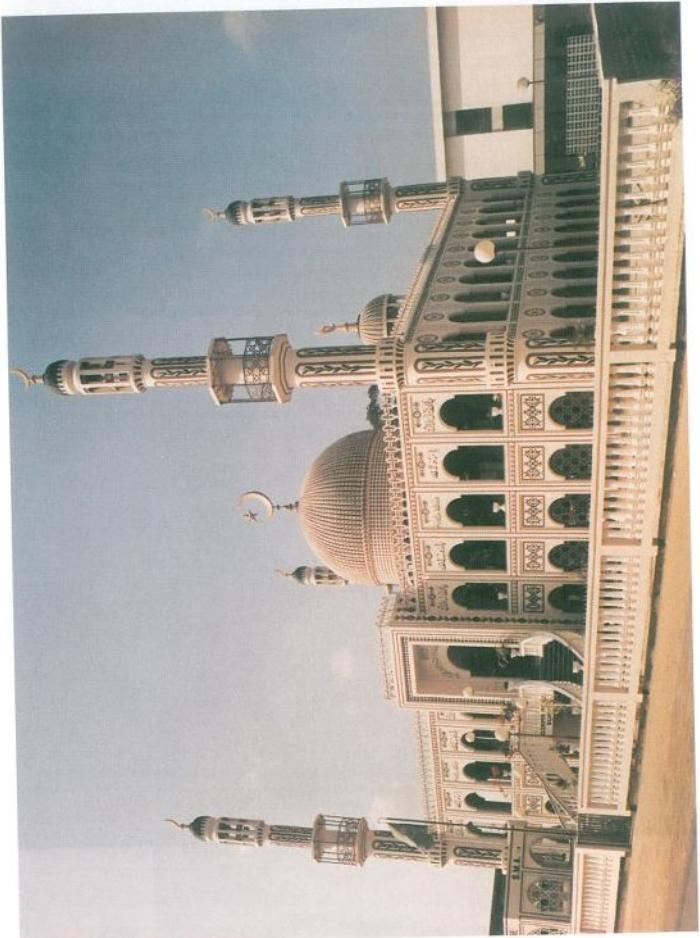
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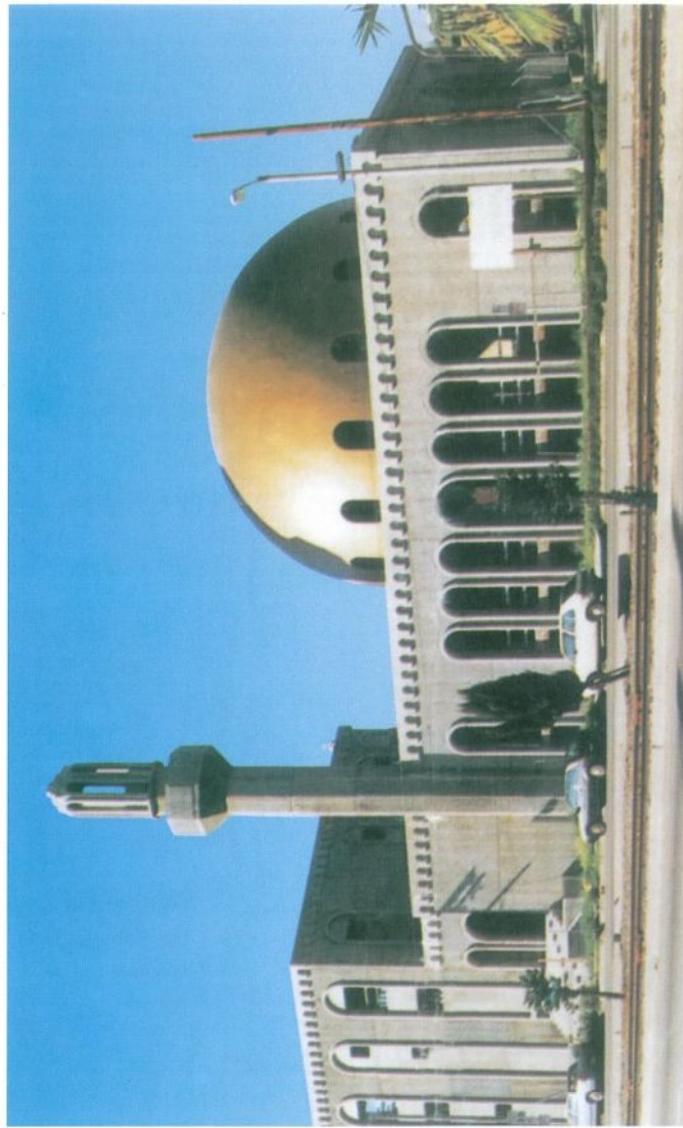
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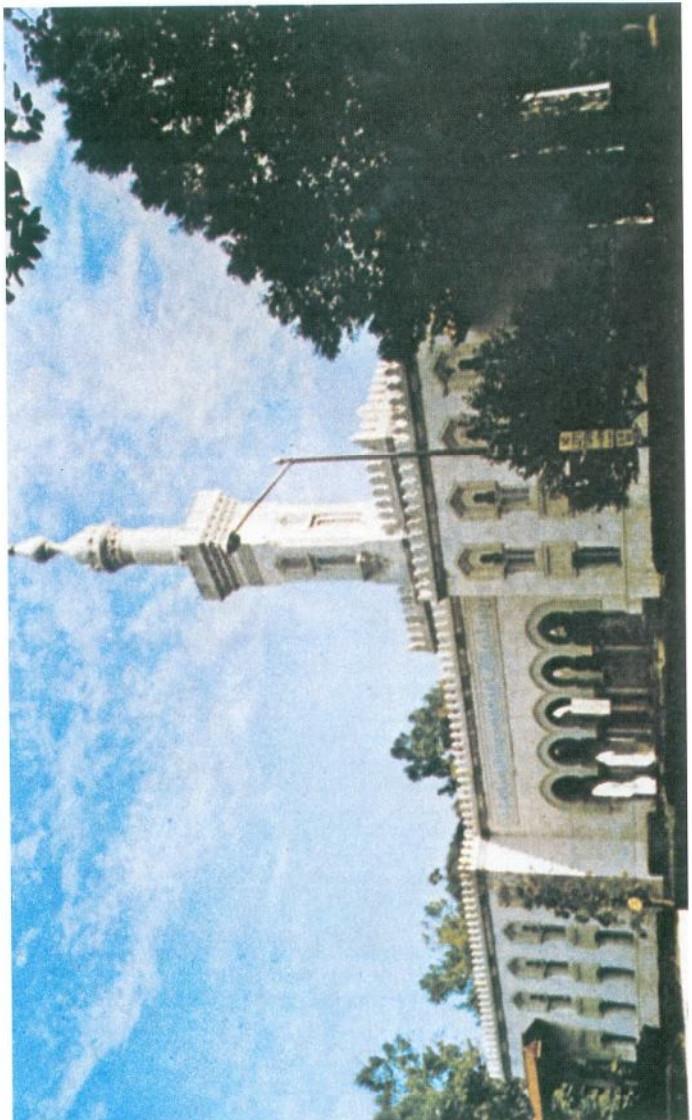
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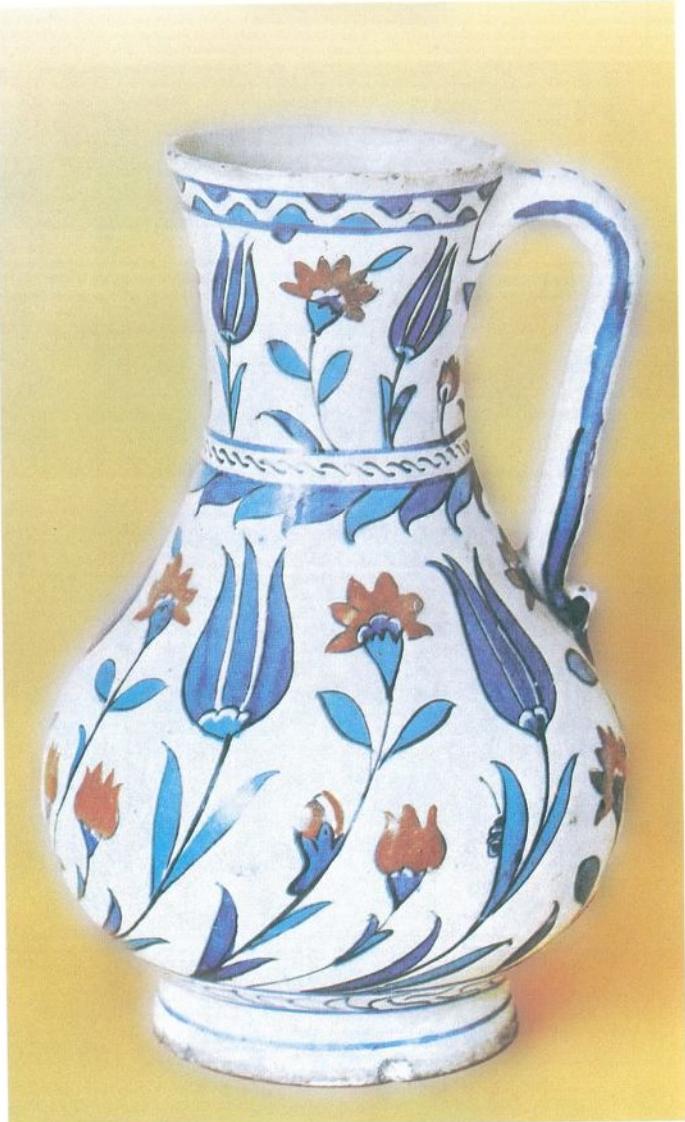
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(*Private collection exhibition. Sursock Museum in Beirut.*
31 May - 15 July 1974. Publ. Art Islamique. Rubr. 93)

CHAPTER XII ISLAM IN BRAZIL

by

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1 - Introduction

The Federal Republic of Brazil is one of the largest countries of the World, which, with a total area of 8,511,996 km² encompasses 43% of the total area of South America. It had a total population of 160 million people in 1991 (less than 54 million in 1951). The capital of Brazil since 1960, replacing Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, has a population of about 1.5 million people, whereas the largest cities are Sao Paulo (8.5 million), Rio de Janeiro (5.1 million), Belo Horizonte (1.8 million), Salvador (1.5 million), Fortaleza (1.3 million), and Recife (1.2 million). The official language of the country is Portuguese.

Brazil is located in the Eastern half of South America. It extends over 4,770 km from North to South, and over 4,330 km from East to West. Brazil borders with practically all South American countries : French Guiana, Surinam, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina and Uruguay. It has a long coast on the Atlantic Ocean. The third of Brazil is made up by the vast Amazone Basin that includes the largest tropical forest in the World. About 60% of Brazil is a plateau of low altitude.

Because of its vast area, Brazil has a diversified climate, and could be divided in three zones : the tropical zone, the desertic zone, and the temperate zone. The later, in the South, is the home of most of the population of the country. Forests cover 60% of Brazil, and grasslands around 15%.

Brazil has a fast expanding, highly diversified population. However, its population density is still only 19.5 persons/km², varying greatly, increasing from North to South. It reaches 73 persons/km² in the South-East Zone and less than 3 persons/km² in the North Zone. It is as high as 135 persons/km² in the Sao Paulo State and 322 person/km² in Rio de Janeiro State in the South-East, and as low as 0.6 person/km² in the Roraima State and 1.4 person/km² in the Amazonas State in the North.

Most Brazilians in the 19th Century were of African origin. Today, Brazilians who are partly of African origin, including Mestizos, are the majority, the others are of European origin. Amerindians make up only about 1% of the total population and are in danger of disappearing. About 90% of the people of Brazil are considered Catholic, whereas about 10 million are Protestants. In 1974, the President of the country was Protestant. The number of Muslims was around 600,000 (about 0.4% of the total population of Brazil) in 1991, as estimated by the Brazilian Muslim Community.

Brazil is an agricultural country, with about 26% of the people active in agriculture. It produces large quantities of rice, cassava, maize, wheat, sugarcane, cotton, coffee, soya beans, etc... It has also an important quantity of cattle and produces much meat. Because of its vast forest, Brazil produces wood of varied qualities.

The land of Brazil encompasses much mineral resources, making it one of the richest countries in the World. It produces quartz, diamonds, chromium, uranium, manganese, coal, iron ore, aluminum, gold and practically all other minerals.

Brazil started industrializing since World War II to the point that, today, its industrial production exceeds its agricultural product. Practically, all areas of industrial activity exist in the country, including textiles, food industries, manufactures of automobiles, aero planes, armament, etc...

Pedro Alvarez Cabral, a Portuguese seaman, was the first European to land in what is today Brazil around 1500 CE. He reached the closest point to Africa, in the present Bahia State, and brought in a wood called Brazil, a name given to the entire region. In 1494, the Pope had already "divided" the World between the two Catholic states, Spain and Portugal, including South America, giving the Eastern part to Portugal and the Western part to Spain.

Portugal started colonizing Brazil in 1530, bringing in a flow of Portuguese immigrants, and building the first city, Santos (Sao Paulo). As the flow of Portuguese immigrants did not supply the desired cheap, strong and right-less manpower, Portugal decided to bring in enslaved Africans for its plantations. Between 1549 and 1850, about six million Africans were brought in across the Atlantic under the most horrendous conditions. Eventually the capital was established in Salvador (Bahia).

When Portugal joined Spain after its defeat at the hands of the Moroccans in the Battle of Wadi-Al-Makhazin in 1578, Brazil became part of the Spanish realm as well. When Portugal seceded from Spain in 1763, Brazil remained part of Portugal which transferred its capital from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro, established in 1565.

When Napoleon invaded Portugal in 1807, the Portuguese King moved to Brazil. When he returned to Portugal in 1821, he left the Crown Prince who declared Brazil independent in 1822, and himself as Emperor Pedro I. The population of Brazil was then four million. In 1888, slavery was abolished, and in 1889 the Republic was declared. In 1960, the capital was moved from Rio de Janeiro to the newly founded Brasilia. Initially, the population of Brazil grew

through immigration eliminating the native people, but today the growth is mainly natural. Between 1884 and 1962 only five million immigrants entered Brazil. Catholicism was removed as official religion in 1889 and re-instated in 1934 to be removed again in 1946.

Brazil is a federation of 22 states, the capital federal district and four federal territories. These states and territories are grouped for development purposes into five zones : The North ; the North-East ; the Central-West ; the South-East ; and the South. Muslim presence in all these zones shall be considered separately. Table 1.1 gives the zones, including their total populations and areas.

There is a big discrepancy in the areas and the populations of the zones and their states. The largest zone, the North, covers 45% of the area of Brazil, but only 6.8% of its total population. The most populated zone, the South-East, is the home of 43% of the population but covers only 10.9% of the territory. The most populated state is that of Sao Paulo in the South-East with a population of 23.5 million in 1990. The least populated is the Territory of Roraima, located between Guyana and Venezuela, in the North, with 136,000 people.

Table 1.1 : The Development Zones of Brazil in 1990

Zone	Area in Km ²	Population	Number of states and territories	Population density
North	3,851,560	10,581,561	7	2.7
North-East	1,556,002	44,429,181	9	28.6
Central-West	1,604,852	10,091,301	4	6.3
South-East	924,266	67,067,873	4	72.6
South	575,316	23,393,001	3	40.7
Total	8,511,996	155,562,917	27	18.3

Similarly, Muslim presence vary from one Zone to another. In general, Muslims are more present in the South-East, South, and Central-West, than in the North and the North-East.

This author visited twice several states of Brazil and their Muslim leaders (see Table 1.2). In the first visit, in the period 18-25/12/1973, he was a delegate of the Muslim World League to the Muslim Community of South America. The author discussed with its leaders the ways in which they must organize and urged them to form a federation and to establish links with the descendants of all old immigrations : Andalucian, African and Syrian. He visited the states of Para, Rio de Janeiro, D.F. of Brasilia, and Parana (Curitiba, Londrina, Paranaqua).

In the second visit, in the period 19-24/8/1987, he was a delegate of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The author met with the leaders of the Muslim Community, the Ambassadors of Muslim countries, the then Foreign Minister, Mr. Paulo Tarso Flecha, and the then President of the Republic, President Jose Sarny. He visited the states of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo as well as the D.F. of Brasilia.

Much of the information reported in this chapter is first-hand information, as this author remained in contact with the Muslim Community of Brazil.

Table 1.2 : The Visits of Dr. Ali Kettani to Brazil

State	18-25/12/1973	19-24/8/1987
Para	18/12	-
Brasilia	18-20/12	20-22/8
Rio de Janeiro	20-21/12	19-20/8
Sao Paulo	21-23/12	22-24/8
Parana	23-25/12	-

2 - History of Islam in Brazil

Islam presence became continuous in Brazil since the first Portuguese landings. Muslims came in three main waves as elsewhere in the American continent: the European wave in the 16th Century; the African wave from the 16th to the 19th Century and the Asian wave in the 19th and 20th Century. The effects of the first wave are barely surviving, those of the second wave are resurfacing, and the third wave is the most active at present.

When the Portuguese started their colonization of Brazil in the 16th Century, they specifically forbade those who were of Muslim origin among their citizens to emigrate to their newly acquired territories. In spite of this prohibition, many Andalucian Muslims did arrive to Brazil, most of them secretly. Portugal established an Inquisition against them in collaboration with the Catholic Church. As the Andalucians struggled to survive, they had to keep their Islamic faith secret.

In 1594, the Tribunal of Bahia published a statement in which it described the appearances of those Christians who might be Muslims secretly. Among them are washing, waking up early, fasting, cleanliness of clothes especially on Fridays, etc... This Tribunal burnt on the stake many Muslim victims as did its counterparts in Spain and Portugal. Many more Muslims were enslaved or put to row on boats.

At present, many Brazilians claim an Andalucian Muslim origin. When this author visited the State of Parana on 23-25/12/1973, he was informed that many Brazilians of Portuguese origin in that State keep Qur'ans inherited from their ancestors, as revered treasures, although they profess to be Christian.

Many young Brazilians of Portuguese origin have embraced Islam recently, claiming this origin. In Sao Paulo, they formed a community as will be described later.

Already since the 16th Century, Portugal started capturing Africans on the West Coast of Africa and bringing them to Brazil where they were enslaved and used as manpower for sugarcane and other plantations, especially in the State of Bahia. Many of these Africans were Muslims, from such tribes as Mandingua, Fulani, Yoruba and Hausa. They were usually caught by the animist kings of the forest in their wars with the Muslim Sultans of the savannah and sold to Portugal on the African Coast.

Many of the enslaved African Muslims were learned imams and alims who were able to keep the knowledge of Arabic and Islamic culture alive among other victims and their descendants. They even succeeded in converting to Islam other enslaved Africans and other oppressed people such as the Amerindians. Thus, they were able to keep Islam alive in Brazil for more than two centuries, and to establish strong Muslim communities in the states of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and San Luis de Maranon. Their mosques and Qur'anic schools were counted by the hundreds. They were called by the Portuguese "Male", from Arabic "Mu'allim", i.e., teacher.

Already in the mid 17th Century, many of the slaves fled the plantations and organized themselves in free communities, called Mocambos, under African kings. These communities united in a state called by the Portuguese the "Palmares Republic", as the Africans lived in areas amid "palm trees". Their capital was Macaco, and among its major cities was Sucupera. The most known king of this "Republic" was Gangasuma. The Portuguese spent great efforts in destroying this African state. After dozens of disastrous expeditions, they succeeded in doing so in January 1676. The Muslims had an important presence and great influence in the "Palmares Republic".

In the 19th Century, Brazilian African Muslims felt strong enough to free themselves from the subservient status to which they had been consigned by the Portuguese establishment. They led a war of liberation that started in 1807 and lasted until 1835, during which time

they were finally defeated and persecuted mercilessly. This "Revolt of the Male" led to the complete destruction of all Islamic institutions, including mosques and schools. The old spirit of the Catholic Inquisition showed its ugly face again after more than one century of relative tolerance. The Brazilain Portuguese authorities forbade any profession of Islam and declared the death sentence for any Muslim.

Hundreds of thousands of persecuted Black Brazilian Muslims crossed the Atlantic back to Africa where they form today thriving communities in such ports as Porto-Novo, Lagos and Freetown, still keeping their Portuguese names. Others remained in Brazil. Some lost their Islamic faith to Christianity to be able to survive. Others kept it secret, repeating the experience of the Moriscos. In the second half of the 20th Century, due to their contacts with the Muslims of the third wave and following the example of the Black Muslims in the USA, they started forming Muslim communities all across Brazil, especially in Sao Paulo and Bahia.

In 1860, the third wave of Muslim immigration started, most of if from Greater Syria, which was at that time part of the Ottoman Empire. This wave did not stop till today. The reason of its start was in the beginning economical. Poor economic conditions in the lands that form today Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine pushed many young people toward the Western Hemisphere for work and better living conditions. The slow disintegration of the Ottoman State was also the driving force behind keeping this emigration alive. By 1887, the number of these immigrants was 20,000.

Most of the first emigrants were Christians from Syria proper. It is estimated that from 1860 to 1960, about 400,000 Syrians emigrated to Brazil, 60,000 of them were Muslim. These were mostly illiterate, knew little about Islam and came without their womenfolk. They started mixed families. As they had often to hide their Islamic faith for fear of persecution, many of their descendants are lost to Islam.

This Arab Community was nevertheless very active culturally. In 1907, they had in Brazil seven periodicals in the Arabic language, four of them were weeklies.

After World War I, the break up of the Ottoman State, and the division of Greater Syria in the four entities mentioned above, more emigrants arrived from Syria and Lebanon. These new immigrants were better educated, imbued with Arab nationalism, both Muslims and Christians. Some of their writers and poets became giants of Arabic literature of all times, through a new school called the "Literature of Emigration" (Adab al-Mahjar). Among the greatest Arab posts of Brazil are Fauzi Al-Maalouf, Ilyas Farhat and al-Shaer Al-Qarawi, all Christian, but highly imbued with a special love for all things Arabic, including Islam. The Palestinians started also to emigrate between World Wars I and II. First, the Christians of Beit Jala and Betlehem, then others including Muslims.

The recent emigration started after World War II. It is mostly Lebanese and Palestinian. The first is due to economic reasons. The civil war that lasted about twenty years in the 1970's and 1980's was an impetus of a large Muslim Lebanese emigration to Brazil and elsewhere. The reasons of Palestinian emigration are obvious ever since their homeland was targeted by the British for the ingathering of Jews from around the World.

At present, many descendants of Syrians are either lost or latent Muslims. But an increasing number among them are returning to Islam. Some became great industrialists, such as Mohieddin Hawash in Sao Paulo, deputies in the Brazilian Parliament, such as Leila Hussein, a Senator in Brasilia from Manaus. The Syrians established the first Islamic organizations between the two World wars.

The Lebanese are the first to establish new Islamic institutions in the last 20 years, starting a true Islamic revival, followed by others. Their identity on arrival to Brazil was frankly Islamic and had no doubts about the means and ways of preserving it. They established

Islamic associations whenever they settled, and supplied the most important leadership of the Brazilian Muslim Community today.

Palestinians, on the contrary, were divided between the idea of organizing within secular "Palestinian Clubs" and "Islamic Associations". For a while, they chose the first. But with time, these clubs proved to be seats of political conflicts that contributed nothing to the preservation of the Arabic language and Islam among their families and descendants. It is only recently that the Palestinians started to join Islamic organizations or to establish new ones in areas of their presence.

Since 1975, thousands of non-Muslims started to embrace Islam, and to establish full fledged communities in large cities, such as Sao Paulo. Many are distinguished citizens, such as a former mayor of the city of Belem, capital of the Para State, a judge in the city of Manaus, and Jose Faria, the coach of the Moroccan football team who chose the name of Mehdi when he became Muslim in 1980. There are Muslim high officers in the Brazilian Army, such as General Mohamed, and Muslim deputies in the National Parliament and the parliaments of many states.

Muslims of different origins settled in different parts of Brazil. Most Muslims of Portuguese origin are in Sao Paulo. Most African-Brazilians are in Bahia. Most Syrians settled in Sao Paulo and Amazonas. Most Palestinians settled in Rio Grande do Sul and Brasilia. Most Lebanese are in Parana.

It is hard to assess the number of Brazilian Muslims. They were estimated to be 600 in 1907, 3,000 in 1940, and 25,000 in 1950. Based on first-hand information from the Muslim Brazilian Community, they must be about 600,000 in 1991, as shown by origin in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 : Muslims in Brazil per National Origin in 1991

National Origin	Number
Syrian	200,000
Lebanese	150,000
Palestinian	130,000
African	100,000
Other	20,000
Total	600,000

3 - Islam in the South-East

Four states constitute the South-East of Brazil : Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo, and Minas Gerais. This is the most populated region of Brazil as it is the home of 43% of its population for only 11% of its total area. Table 3.1 gives the population of these states and their areas.

Table 3.1 : The South-East Region of Brazil

State	Area in Km ²	Population in 1950	Population in 1990
Sao Paulo	248,256	9,243,000	33,516,217
Minas Gerais	586,624	7,840,000	16,854,745
Rio de Janeiro	43,653	4,739,000	14,061,694
Espirito Santo	45,733	871,000	2,635,307
Total	924,266	22,693,000	67,067,873

This Region is the core of Brazil. It is limited to the North by the State of Bahia, to the East by the states of Goias and Matto Grosso do Sul, to the South by the State of Parana, and to the East by the Atlantic Ocean. This Region has extensive mineral, agricultural and industrial production. It has a tropical coast and a temperate plateau.

Sao Paulo State

This is the state of Brazil of largest Islamic presence. Its capital, Sao Paulo, is the largest city of the country with a metropolitan area of almost 13 million people. Its Muslim population could be estimated at about 315,000 (in 1991) or about 0.8% of its total population. There were 18 Islamic organizations in the Sao Paulo State in 1991, each having its Islamic Center and School.

1 - Sao Paulo City (SP)

The first Muslim organization ever established in Brazil was in Sao Paulo City. In 1929, Muslims established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Sao Paulo" (SBMSP). From the beginning, the aim of SBMSP was to establish the first Mosque of Brazil. They bought a land in the Avenida do Estado in 1938 and started building a mosque on it on 10/1/1942.

The Mosque of Sao Paulo was officially opened on 16/6/1950, a beautiful building with a Fatimid minaret. King Farouk of Egypt and Egyptian princes contributed in the construction of the mosque. It can accomodate 1,500 worshippers at a time in its prayer hall. On Friday, about 300 persons are usually present for the congregational prayer. In Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha, up to 4,000 Muslims crowd the Mosque. Attached to the Mosque are conference halls and offices.

The first SBMSP President was Ali Mohamed Al-Hajj. When Akram Zu'ayter visited Sao Paulo on 6-25/9/1947, the SBMSP President was Abu-Al-Huda Al-Jundi (the owner of an Arab restaurant) and the Honorary President was Tewfiq Sultani. The SBMSP President was Hussein Mohamed Al-Zoghbi in 1974, Said Yassine in 1983, and Ahmed El-Bacha in 1987.

In 1933, the Muslims of Sao Paulo City started an Arabic language magazine called "Al-Dhikra" (Remembrance). In 1968, they established a full time Islamic School in the district of Vila Carrao which serves about 500 students. Its Director in 1987 was Naim Dablan. They also established an Islamic Cemetery in the suburb of

Guarulhos. In 1973, they bought about 1000 m² of land for building businesses the income of which to be used for the running of the Islamic Center. Most members of this Community are Sunnis of Syrian and Lebanese origin.

Egypt's Al-Azhar University sent Imams to the SBMSP Mosque. Sheikh Abdullah Abdul-Shakur Kamil was Imam from 29/10/1956 until 8/10/1975. He changed the name of "Al-Dhikra" journal into "Al-Uruba". He was replaced by Sheikh Shaaban, who was followed by Sheikh Ali Al-Rifai Nematallah, also from Al-Azhar, who remained Imam until 1983.

In 1956, a second Islamic organization started in Sao Paulo City. It is the "Islamic Club in Brazil", established by Rafeek Taksh, an Alawite of Syrian origin. This association bought a land in the 1960's, but started their activities in rented facilities, teaching Arabic and Islamic principles to children.

In the 1980's, a third Islamic organization was established in Sao Paulo City by African Brazilians who emigrated to Sao Paulo from the North-East Region and declared their Islam openly. The organization is called "Sociedade Muculmana Brasileira, Sao Paulo" (SMB). It is very active among African Brazilians and is expanding very fast. It has followers all across Brazil and defines itself as an Islamic Movement. It is headed by Nalcidef Oliveira Gonsalves, and his followers call him "Menelike", Ethiopian for king. Among its active members is Naoma Jaer Massio, an employee of the Sao Paulo Municipality.

A fourth Islamic organization was established in the 1980's by Arab Muslims. It is the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana Cultural" (SBMC).

Other Islamic associations were established in Greater Sao Paulo, namely in five townships : Guarulhos, Sao Bernardo do Campo, Mogi das Cruzes, Santo Amaro, Sao Miguel Paulista, and Pari.

2 - Guarulhos (SP)

Guarulhos is located on the South-East of Sao Paulo City. It has a population of 540,000 including several thousand Muslims of Lebanese and Palestinian origin. The Islamic Cemetery is located in Guarulhos. SBMSP started to build a Mosque, an Islamic Center, and an Islamic School in the late 1970's. As more Muslims settled in Guarulhos, the Community became autonomous from SBMSP under the name of "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Guarulhos".

There is in Guarulhos as well the "African Brazilian Center for Islamic Studies", established in the 1930's. One of the most active members of this Center is the lawyer Walter Gomes who gives regular lectures on issues about Islam. Another active member is Ilma Maria Veira, an active member of the Black Liberation Movement in Brazil, and a professor of history. The head of the Center is Jose Eilton Valias, an industrial of Sao Paulo. They are all African Brazilian Muslims.

3 - Mogi das Cruzes (SP)

Mogi das Cruzes is located to the East of both Sao Paulo City and Guarulhos. It has a population of about 200,000 people including many Muslims of Lebanese origin. They established in the 1980's the "Sociedade Cultural Beneficiente Islamica de Mogi das Cruzes". It established its Islamic Center and plans its Mosque and Islamic School.

4 - Sao Bernardo do Campo (SP)

Sao Bernardo do Campo is located to the South-East of Sao Paulo City. It has a total population of about 430,000 people including several thousands Muslims. It is the site of a very important Islamic Association named "Sociedade Islamica de Beneficencia Abu Baker El Sadik" (SIBAB).

SIBAB was established in the 1970's. Its Secretary General is Ahmed Saifi (a Lebanese), its Imam is Sheikh Ihsan Mohammed Ali. Its importance comes from the fact that most its members are young

Brazilian converts, mostly of Portuguese origin, who identify with the Islamic history of Andalucia. This Association defines itself as an Islamic Movement, and is very active across Brazil.

SIBAB bought a piece of land in Sao Bernardo do Campo and built on it around 1990 a Mosque, an Islamic Center and a full-time school. SIBAB organizes youth camps and plans to buy a camp for the purpose. It gives lectures and classes on Islam in schools, mosques, homes and churches. It establishes links with Brazilian converts, wherever they are located, and gives classes to their children on Arabic and Islam. SIBAB publishes Islamic books, translated from the most known Arabic ones. Its has a special program on Radio. SIBAB is very active all across South America in helping people return to Islam.

SIBAB is also the seat of the "Centro de Divulgacao do Islam Para A America Latina", headed also by Ahmed Ali Saifi. This Center has activities across South America, and produces a good Islamic magazine called "Al-Fajr".

5 - Santo Amaro (SP)

Santo Amaro is located to the South-East of Sao Paulo City. In the early 1970's, SBMSP bought a 8,500 m² piece of land in Santo Amaro with the purpose of establishing a full time Islamic Community Center and a Mosque. All these institutions have been built in a most impressive architecture. They are now ran by the local Muslim community which became autonomous from SBMSP under the name of "Sociedade Beneficente Islamica de Santo Amaro". In the 1980's, the President of this Association was Hussein M. Al-Zoghbi, and its Imam was Sheikh Gul Said Shah.

The Primary Islamic School of Santo Amaro started functioning in 1982. It has now about 500 pupils. Santo Amaro is also the seat of the Tabligh Jamaat of Brazil, and that of the "Federacao das Associacos Muculmanas do Brasil" (Federation of the Muslim Associations of

Brazil, FAMBRAS). Most muslims of Santo Amaro are Lebanese, including the President.

6 - Sao Miguel Paulista (SP)

Sao Miguel Paulista is located in the North of Sao Paulo City. It is the home of a large Muslim Community of Lebanese origin. They established in 1981 the "Associscao Recreativa e Cultural Islamica de Sao Miguel Paulista". In 1983, they bought a Protestant Church and converted it into a Mosque. They also built a Community Center and a full time primary Islamic School, with about 400 children in 1990.

7 - Pari (SP)

This is an inner suburb of Sao Paulo, located on the Southern bank of the Tiete River. It is the home of a small Shia Muslim Lebanese community, which organized itself separately in 1988 and established its Islamic institutions, including Mosque, Community Center and School.

8 - Sociedade Islamica do Brazil

Sao Paulo City is also the seat of the "Sociedade Islamica do Brazil" (Islamic Society of Brazil, SIB) whose Center, established in 1983, is located in Rua Sena Madureira. It includes a library and Mosque large enough for 100 people. SIB President is Dr. Murched Omar Taha, a Brazilian Surgeon of Lebanese origin. He is also the President of the "Arabo-Brazilian Cultural Center of Sao Paulo" established in 1981 in Rua Dr. Diego de Faria. SIB publishes Islamic books, organizes Islamic conferences and distributes Qur'ans. It has also a social activity including free medication to the needy.

The other Sao Paulo towns where Muslims are organized are Jundiai, Santos, Campinas, Sao Jose dos Campos, Taubate, Barretos, Colina and Aracatuba.

9 - Jundiai (SP)

Jundiai is a town of about 100,000 inhabitants located at about 60 km to the North-West of Sao Paulo City. It is the home of a large

Muslim Community of Lebanese origin. They established in the 1970's the "Centro Islamico de Jundiai". Later, they built a Mosque, a Community Center and a full-time Islamic school. The Imam in the 1980's was Sheikh Mustafa Khatashi.

10 - Santos (SP)

Santos is a large city of about 500,000 people, located on the Atlantic shore, at 72 km to the South-East of Sao Paulo City. It is the home of a large Muslim community of diversified origin, including Syrian, Palestinian, Lebanese, Portuguese and African. They established the "Sociedade Beneficiente Islamica do Litoral Paulista" in the late 1970's. They started their activities in an apartment of Porta da Pria. In February 1981, they initiated the construction of a large Mosque, Islamic Center and Islamic school, all finished in 1985. The Imam in 1980's was Sheikh Mohammed Mustafa Jabuli.

11 - Campinas (SP)

Campinas is a city of about 600,000 people located at 93 km to the North-East of Sao Paulo City. It is the site of an important university "Unicamp". The first Muslims arrived in Campinas in 1955 from Lebanon and Palestine. They were followed in 1961 by Indian Muslims, mostly from Mozambique and South Africa, and Egyptians. Today about half the Muslims are Arabs, 40% Indian, and 10% converts.

The Indians took the initiative of organizing the Muslim Community. First, they used to visit the SBMSP for their Islamic activities. In 1972, they started their religious gatherings in the home of Ahmed Bhabha, an Indian, then in that of Fayed Abdouche, a Lebanese. In 1979, they established the "Centro Islamico de Campinas" with the help of Muslims from South Africa and Saudi Arabia. It can accomodate up to 400 worshippers. About 50 people are present in the Friday prayers and it is full or Eid occasions. The first

President was Dr. Ibrahim Mudh Abdellatif (originating from Betlehem in Palestine, Professor at Unicamp). He is in Campinas since 1958. The Vice-President was Ismael Hatia (a Gujarati from South Africa). The Secretary General was M. Jamil (a Lebanese). The Imam was Sheikh Abdul-Salam Suleiman (a Gujarati who came directly from India).

The Campinas Islamic Center is very active in educating the young and adults, giving classes of Arabic and Islam and carrying out social, cultural and sport activities.

12 - Sao Jose dos Campos (SP)

Sao Jose dos Campos is a city of several hundred thousands people located at 93 km to the East of Sao Paulo City. It is the home of a community of reverts to Islam, similar to the Muslim Community of Sao Bernardo do Campo. They established in the 1930's the "Sociedade Islamica de Beneficia Ali Ibn Abi Taleb". Its President is Mohammed Ali Somaili, a Moroccan. Several Egyptian families live in this town as well.

13 - Taubate (SP)

Taubate (150.000 people) is located at 134 km at the East of Sao Paulo City and 41 km to the East of Sao Jose dos Campos. It is the home of a Muslim Community which established in the 1980's the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Taubate". It was headed in 1988 by Hammoud Khalil Somaidi. Most of the Muslims of Taubate are from the town of Sultan Yacoub in Lebanon. Their Imam until 1988 was Sheikh Mohammed Hassan Aref. He was succeeded by Sheikh Anwar Abdussalam.

14 - Barretos (SP)

Barretos (200.000 people) is located near the border of the State of Minas Gerais, at 423 km to the North-West of Sao Paulo City. It is the home of several thousands Muslims of Lebanese origin. Already in 1962, they organized under the "Uniao Benificiente Musulmana de Barretos" (UBMB). They bought a piece of land and built a Mosque,

an Islamic Center and a full-time Islamic School. This Mosque Complex was opened in 1976. In 1974, the UBMB President was Mohammed Ali Jum'a, and the Imam in the period 1977-1981 was Sheikh Ali Al-Rifa'i, from Egypt.

15 - Colina (SP)

Colina is a small town South of Barretos. It is the home of a Shia Muslim Community of Lebanese origin. They established in the 1980's the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Colina".

16 - Aracatuba (SP)

Aracatuba (100.000 people) is located near the border of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, at 539 km to the North-West of Sao Paulo City. By the end of the 1980's, the local Muslims organized themselves in the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Aracatuba"

Minas Gerais

Muslims in Minas Gerais are few, dispersed and poorly organized. Their number in 1991 was estimated at about 20,000. In the 1980's the Muslims of Belo Horizonte, the capital of the State, organized themselves in the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Minas Gerais". Most hail from old Syrian emigration and include, besides Sunnis, members of such Muslim sects as the Druze and the Alawites. However, there are no sectarian differences in the Community. There are also a number of African Brazilian Muslims in Minas Gerais, descendants of those who fled the Male revolt in Bahia in 1835.

Rio de Janeiro

There were about 14,000 Muslims in 1991 in the Rio de Janeiro State. They are of diversified origins and are concentrated in Rio de Janeiro City. They organized themselves in three locations : Rio de Janeiro City, Volta Redonda and Jacarepagua.

Many African Brazilian Muslims fled Bahia to Rio Janeiro in the 19th Century and kept their Islam. Among them was Carmen Teixeira da Concession, born in Salvador (Bahia) on 19/7/1877 and fled to Rio

de Janeiro with her family in 1892. She was still living in 1982 at the age of 105. At this ripe age, she was a fervent Muslim, praying her five daily prayers, and saluting other Muslims with "as-salamu alaykum". She was a member of a pseudo-secret Muslim group in Rio de Janeiro whose members gathered to pray together.

1 - Rio de Janeiro City (RJ)

This is the capital of the State and the old capital of Brazil. It is the second largest metropolis of Brazil after Sao Paulo City. Most Muslims of this city are shopkeepers. Some are rich tradesmen. The majority are Sunni, but a minority are Shia.

Rio de Janeiro, was the goal of the first Syrians who emigrated to Brazil. In 1889, they were already organized as Muslims. In 1907, there were 500 Syrian Muslims in Rio de Janeiro, out of a total Syrian (and Lebanese) Muslim population of 600 in Brazil.

In 1930, the Muslims established the "Sociedade Beneficente Musulmana de Rio de Janeiro" (SBMRJ) in an apartment in the city center. The founders were thirteen, including Abdullah Laham, the first President, Khaled Yassine and Ahmed Amir. Presidents are elected for two years. Among later presidents were Khalil Ayoubi, Muhieddin Al-Jamal (a Palestinian) and Chaher Kalaoun. SBMRJ organizes Friday prayers regularly in its Center, about 30 people take part. These include Palestinians, Lebanese, Indians, Pakistanis and Brazilian revert. The khutba is in Arabic, followed by a resume in Portuguese.

Since 1973, SBMRJ became more active with the participation of dynamic young Imams. They organize lectures for the young in the Center and carry out social and da'wah work. Sheikh Hamad Saleh Mahairi, a Syrian, became Imam of Rio de Janeiro in 1982-1986, financed by Dar-ul-Ifta (Saudi Arabia). He was followed by Sheikh Taisir Ali Fares. Since 1974, the teacher of Arabic and Islam was a dynamic Brazilian revert, Said Ibn Saifullah. When this author visited Rio de Janeiro in 1974, the President was Muhieddin Al-Jamal. The

present SBMRJ Honorary President is Ahmed Mokhtar Zein, a rich local Muslim benefactor, originating from Lebanon.

SBMRJ established an Islamic school near the airport. It is a three-floor building accomodating 500 students. The official Brazilian program is given along with Arabic and Islam, as in other Brazilian Islamic Schools.

Rio de Janeiro City has another Islamic association, the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana Alauita de Rio de Janeiro", established in 1931 by Syrians of the Alawite sect. However, those of Rio de Janeiro carry out the same religious activities as the Sunni organizations, with whom they have good relations. The Sunni Imam carries also his function in the Alawite Mosque. The organization has a two-floor center, one is a prayer hall used by about 40 faithful on Fridays. On Eids, more than 200 people are present.

This association opened an Islamic School in 1978. It has about 100 students. The President before 1984 was Ibrahim Jalul. After 1984, he was Ali Mahmud Ibrahim.

2 - Jacarepagua (RJ)

Jacarepagua is an outer suburb at 34 km in the South-East of Rio de Janeiro City. Ahmed Mokhtar Zein built a Mosque there on a 4,000 m² piece of land he bought in 1974. The Mosque was inaugurated on 13/1/1983. Its prayer hall has an area of 400 m² and can accomodate 1,500 faithful. Zein gifted this Mosque to SBMRJ.

3 - Volta Redonda (RJ)

Volta Redonda is a large town at 127 km to the North-East of Rio de Janeiro. It is the home of about 3,000 Muslims. They organized themselves in the late 1980's and started Friday prayers in rented facilities.

Espirito Santo

There are few Muslims in the Espirito Santo State, probably not exceeding 1,000 in 1991. They are descendants of old immigration. They are scattered and not organized.

4 - Islam in the South

Three states constitute the Southern Region of Brazil : Parana, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul, from North to South. The capitals of these states are Curitiba, Florianopolis and Porto Alegre respectively. This is the southernmost Region of Brazil, limited to the South by Uruguay, to the East by Argentina and Paraguay, and to the North by the South-East and the Central-West regions, and to the East by the Atlantic Ocean. The South is the home of 15% of the total population of Brazil for 6.8% of its total area. Table 4.1 gives the population and areas of these states.

Table 4.1 : The Southern Region of Brazil

State	Area in Km ²	Population	
		1950	1990
Rio Grande do Sul	280,674	4,213,000	9,449,932
Parana	199,324	2,150,000	9,341,569
Santa Catarina	95,318	1,578,000	4,601,500
Total	575,316	7,941,000	23,393,001

The South Region is made up geographically of three zones : the low-lying coast with a width of around 50 km; a hilly zone in the center; and rivers and forests in the West. The climate is temperate

except in the northern coast where it is tropical. The economy of this Region is based on the culture of coffee, cotton and cereals, and the production of wood. The natives of this Region are extinct. Most people are today of Spanish and Portuguese origin, as well as Italian, German, Polish and Russian background.

Rio Grande do Sul

There are about 20,000 Muslims in Rio Grande do Sul (or 0.2% of the total population). The majority of the old immigration are Syrian, those who arrived more recently are Palestinian. They all work in trade. Most Muslims of Rio Grande do Sul started arriving in the 1960's. So far these Muslims established only two organizations : in Santa Maria and Porto Alegre. These have no properly built mosques and Islamic centers nor any schools yet. There are unorganized Muslim communities in six other cities : Carazinho, Pelotas, Sao Borja, Santo Angelo and Ijui. The Muslim communities of Santana de Lovamento, Jaguara and Chuy are of Palestinian origin and have their Centers and Mosques across the border in Uruguay.

1 - Porto Alegre (RS)

Porto Alegre is the capital of the State. It is located to the North of the Lagoa dos Patos, not too far from the Atlantic Ocean. It has a population of 1.5 million people. This city has a Muslim population of Palestinian origin of about 4,000 who established in the 1970's an "Arab Palestinian Union". As this organization had no effect in preserving the Muslim culture of the second generation, the Muslim Community changed it in September 1975 into the "Sociedade Beneficiente Muculmana de Porto Alegre", as advised by Sheikh Abdel-Aziz Al-Inani, the then Egyptian Imam of Paranagua (PR).

2 - Santa Maria (RS)

Santa Maria (250,000 inhabitants) is situated in the center of the State, at 380 Km from Porto Alegre. It has a Muslim population of

about 2,000, originally from Palestine. They established in the 1980's the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Santa Maria".

Parana

After Sao Paulo State, Parana is the state of Brazil of highest Muslim presence and better organization. It has a Muslim population of about 60,000 people (0.64% of the total). In 1991, there were 9 Muslim organizations in eight different cities : Curitiba, Londrina, Paranagua, Foz do Iguacu, Maringa, Ponta Grossa, Guanapuava, Campo Murao, and Tijucas. There are good relations between these communities. For instance, in February 1981, a Muslim youth group visited the communities of Curitiba, Paranagua, Guarapuavas, Ponta Grossa and Foz do Iguacu.

1 - Curitiba (PR)

Curitiba is located on the hill area at about 100 km from the coast. It has a population of about one million, including about 10,000 Muslims. Muslims started coming to Curitiba around 1925, mostly from Lebanon. The majority are Sunni and the minority Shia. Many are prosperous businessmen owning shops in the city center. Others are in liberal professions. Along with the non-Muslim Arabs, they have political influence in the City Hall. In 1973, out of 36 city councillors 13 were Arabs, many of them Muslim. Also, Muslims are always present in the State Parliament and in other high offices.

On 28/7/1957 (1/1/1377 AH), the Muslims of Curitiba, led by Hussein Omairi, established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Parana" (SBMP). In 1958, SBMP bought a piece of land and built a Mosque Complex, including a Community Center, a home for the Imam, and a full-time Islamic School. The latter started classes in 1962. It has about 100 students. In 1973, SBMP bought another piece of land having an area of 2,100 m².

In 1976, SBMP built on this land a beautiful Mosque, with contributions from the local Muslim Community and overseas friends, including the late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. This Mosque has a

beautiful dome and two minarets. In 1983, it was extended to accomodate more people. On Friday prayers more than 100 faithfully are usually present.

The SBMP President for many years, heading a 13 member committee and one of the leaders of the Community is Hussein Al-Omairi, a Shia of Lebanese origin and important businessman in Curitiba. He was one of the SBMP founders, always promoting unity between Shias and Sunnis. He also contributed financially to the Islamic institutions mentioned above. Another distinguished member of the Muslim Community of Curitiba is Said Mohammed Al-Khateeb, a thinker and writer. He published in Portuguese a series of works on culture and on the principles of Islam to the young. Yet another is Fares Messmar, who was SBMP President of in 1983-1984.

In the 1960's, Al-Azhar Mosque sent an Imam to SBMP, Sheikh Mohammed Husamuddin. He was replaced in 1973 by Sheikh Hassan Saleh Al-Inani (1973-1977), then Sheikh Ali Al-Rifa'i (1977-1981) and Sheikh Ahmed Ismail Atieh (1981-1988), etc...All these Imams were Egyptians and Sunnis.

On the other hand, there is a town near Curitiba named Umm Al-Ghayth which was settled on the turn of the century by Algerian Muslims. They later abandoned it and went back home.

2 - Londrina (PR)

Londrina, 390 Km from Curitiba, is located in the North Center of Parana. It has a population of about 400,000, including several thousands Muslims. The majority of these are Lebanese and the minority are Palestinian. Most are tradesmen of modest means, especially when compared to the Muslims of Curitiba.

In 1968, the Muslims established the "Sociedade Beneficente Maculmana de Londrina e Norte do Parana" (SBMLNP). They bought a 1063 m² piece of land, and built on it a Mosque and full-time Islamic School in 1973. Most of the cost of the Mosque Complex was contributed to by the Community. Late King Faisal of Saudi Arabia

made also a small contribution. In 1974, SBMLNP bought another 500 m² adjacent to the Mosque and extended it in 1976 by adding more facilities, including a conference hall.

In addition to the regular Islamic activities in the Mosque, SBMLNP started an Islamic radio and television program. SBMLNP Presidents in the 1970's were Faysal Al-Laqis (1972-1973), Mustafa Al-Sayyid (1973-1974), Yusuf Al-Qadiri (1974-1975), Ahmed Hussein Wahid (1975-1976), etc... In 1973, Dar-ul-Ifta of Saudi Arabia sent them a Syrian Imam, Sheikh Ahmed Salih Mahayri, a very active and competent graduate of the Islamic University of Medina. He gave great importance to both spoken and written communication through his booklets and many articles in the local papers.

Londrina elected a Muslim representative to the Brazilian National Assembly in Brasilia in 1995. He is Yusuf Mohammed Al-Janabi of Lebanese origin. He represents the Progressive Party, a new party with a strong base in North Parana, and got 45,000 votes in the elections. Janabi is a committed Muslim who is active in the SBMLNP and was once its President.

3 - Paranagua (PR)

Paranagua, at 99 km to the East of Curitiba, is the port of the Parana State on the Atlantic Ocean. It has a population of about 100,000, including about 3,000 Muslims who came in the 1960's from the Beqa Valley in Lebanon. They own shops and are of limited means.

On 19/6/1968, the Muslims of Paranagua established the "Sociedade Beneficente Arabo-Muculmana de Paranagua" (SBAMP). They bought a house and converted it into a Mosque and an Islamic School. Then, in January 1969, they bought a 1,125 m² piece of land and extended it on 15/4/1974 with another adjacent one. They built on both a beautiful Mosque Complex, including an Islamic Community

Center and a full time Islamic School, inaugurated in 1978. The School was opened in October 1975 with 83 students in two shifts.

In 1974, the Muslim World League of Saudi Arabia sent to Londrina Sheikh Abdel-Aziz Al-Inani (an Egyptian) as Imam paid by them. The first SBAMP President (until 1978), Ali Ibrabim Al-Tasse, was succeeded by his Vice-President Sabra Ali Bahi.

Other Parana coastal towns, such as Antonina, Matinhos and Morretes are also homes of many Muslims, all members of SBAMP. In 1977, a local businessman of part Christian Arab origin, Jose Garcia Couri, offered SBAMP 72,000 m² of land in Paranagua to build a bigger Mosque Complex.

4 - Ponta Grossa (PR)

Ponta Grossa (200,000 people) is at 120 km to the West of Curitiba. In the late 1970's, its Muslim population established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Ponta Grossa". Starting in April 1981, they built their Mosque Complex including their full time Islamic School. Most Muslims of Ponta Grossa are of Lebanese origin.

5 - Guarapuava (PR)

Guaraquava (150,000 people) is in the Center-South of the State, on the road from Curitiba to Foz de Iguacu. In the late 1970's, its Muslims established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Ponta Grossa". They built their Mosque Complex including a full time Islamic School starting March 1981. Most Muslims of Guarapuava also originate from Lebanon.

6 - Foz do Iguazu (PR)

Foz do Iguazu is located at 658 km to the West from Curitiba on the Parana River, at the junction of the borders of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. Muslims started immigrating to this city since 1960. They number now about 5,000 Muslims, both of Lebanese and Palestinian origin. Most are tradesmen.

First, the Muslims of Foz do Iguazu established the "Arab Union Club", but they were not satisfied as the Club did not cover their religious needs. In 1977, they established the "Centro Cultural Beneficiente Islamico de Foz do Iguazu". Its first President was Ali Said Rahhal and its Vice-President Ahmed Othman. In 1983, they put the cornerstone of their "Mosque Complex". It was inaugurated in 1988 in the presence of many dignitaries. It was named after the second Khaleef Omar Ibn Al-khattab. The Mosque Complex was built on a 8,500 m² piece of land, including the Mosque proper, a conference hall, a home for the Imam, community facilities and a full-time Islamic School named after Imam Ali.

In 1994, the President of the Association was Mohammed Hamid Rahhal, the Vice-Presidents Mohammed-Ali Othman and khaled Ali Al-Omayri and the Treasurer Ali Wahhab. The Imam was Ibrahim Abdellatif, sent by the Egyptian Ministry of Auqaf.

There is in Foz do Iguazu a Shia Community from Southern Lebanon. They established their own Mosque Complex including an Islamic School named after Imam Sadeq.

The city has also an Arab television station directed by Sheikh Khaled Rizq. It is owned by a member of the Muslim Community, Jameel Nakud, and covers a large area in Parana, Argentina and Paraguay.

Furthermore, the City Council of Foz do Iguazu has a Muslim member, Mohammed Barakat.

7 - Maringa (PR)

Maringa (200,000 people) is at 419 km to the West of Curitiba, at the West of Londrina. It has several hundred Muslims, mainly of Lebanese origin. First, they joined the Muslim organization of Londrina. But in the 1980's, as their numbers increased, they formed their own organization, the "Sociedade Beneficiente Muculmana de Maringa". They built later their Mosque and their Islamic school.

8 - Campo Mourao (PR)

Campo Mourao is a small town to the South-West of Maringa. First, its Muslims, of Lebanese and Palestinian origin, joined the Muslim organization of Maringa. In the late 1980's, they formed their own organization, the "Sociedade Beneficiente Muculmana de Campo Murao". The City Council donated to this Society a piece of land for the construction of its Mosque.

9 - Tujucas do Sul (PR)

Tujacas do Sul is a small town to the South-West of Paranagua and to the South-East of Curitiba, near the border with Santa Catarina State. It has a Muslim population of Lebanese origin. They were first part of the Muslim Community of Curitiba, but as their numbers increased, they formed their own association in the late 1980's, the "Sociedade Beneficiente Muculmana de Tujucas".

Santa Catarina

There are about 20,000 Muslims in the State of Santa Catarina (about 0.4% of the total population), many of old Syrian emigration. The new arrivals are mostly Syrians who are closely related to the Muslims of Parana. They are organized in four cities : Lajes, Criciuma, Turabao, and Florianopolis.

1 - Lajes (SC)

Lajes is a small town at the West of the Sierra do Mar, at the West of Florianopolis. It has a Muslim population of Lebanese origin. In 1977, they established the "Sociedade Beneficente Islamica de Lajes". This was a result of the visit of Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Al-Inani, the Egyptian Imam of the Mosque of Brasilia. The first President of the Society was Salim Ali Makki. They built their own Mosque, the first of the State, and a full-time Islamic School.

2- Criciuma (SC)

Criciuma is a port on the Atlantic coast, in the South of the State. In the late 1980's, its Muslims, of Lebanese origin, established the

"Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Criciumá". They plan to build their Mosque and Islamic School.

3 - Turabao (SC)

Turabao is another port on the Atlantic coast, to the North of Criciumá. Its Muslims, of Palestinian origin, established recently the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Turabao".

4 - Florianopolis (SC)

Florianopolis, on the Atlantic shore, is the capital of the State. In 1990, a group of Muslims, mostly reverts, was formed at the University, headed by Professor Abdullah Luigi Farassi, a Professor of Biology. One of the most active members is Khadija Brigitte Guzman, a student of architecture. This is the nucleus of an active Muslim Community in Florianopolis.

5 - Islam in the Central-West

Three states and the Federal District of Brasilia, the Federal Capital, constitute this region. It is a large area which occupies the central regions of Brazil. It is limited to the North by the Northern Region, to the East by the North-East Region and the South-East Region, to the South by the Southern Region and to the West by Bolivia and Paraguay. The Central-West is the home of 6.5% of the total population of Brazil and covers to 18.9% of its total area. Table 5.1 gives the population and the areas of its states and territory.

Table 5.1 : The Central Western Region of Brazil

State or district	area in km ²	Population	
		1950	1990
Goiás	340,166	1,235,000	4,288,415
Mato Grosso	901,421	528,000	2,118,197
Mato Grosso do Sul	357,472	incl. above	1,881,211

Following Table 5.1 : The Central Western Region of Brazil

Federal District	5,794	incl. in Goias	1,803,478
Total	1,604,853	1,753,000	10,091,301

These states are the newest of Brazil and among its fastest expanding. In the 1980's, the original Goias was divided into two states : Tocantins included in the Northern Region, and Goias in the South. Similarly Mato Grosso was divided in two : Mato Grosso in the North, and Mato Grosso do Sul in the South. The Federal District was established on territory originally belonging to Goias. Geographically, this Region is located around the rivers of Parana and Paraguay. It is made up of two zones : forested hills to the East, and marsh lands in the West. The population is mixed, the majority being Amerindians and Blacks, followed by Whites. The economy is rich and diversified with animal husbandry, agricultural products, such as maize, rice, sugarcane, cotton and coffee, and mineral products, such as gold, nickel, copper, lead and bauxite.

Goias

There were about 12,000 Muslims in Goias in 1991 (0.28% of the total population). Most are Lebanese and Palestinians of relatively recent immigration. As elsewhere they are tradesmen. These Muslims are organized in three cities : Goiana, Anapolis, and Jataí.

1 - Goiana (GO)

Goiana, the capital of the State, is located at 202 km to the South-West from Brasilia. In the 1970's, its Palestinian Muslim population established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muçulmana de Goias". In September 1975, this Society put the founding stone of its Mosque Complex which it finished later in the decade.

2 - Anapolis (GO)

Anapolis is a small town on the road between Goiana and Brasilia, at 150 km to the South-West from the latter and 52 km from the former. Its growing Muslim population was organized in the 1980's.

They established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muçulmana de Anapolis". Later, they built a Mosque Complex, including an Islamic Center and an Islamic School.

3 - Jatai (GO)

Jatai is a small town located in the South-West of the State, near the borders of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul. In the 1980's, the Muslims of Jatai established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muçulmana de Jatai", which has not yet built its Islamic institutions.

Mato Grosso

There were about 8,000 Muslims in the State of Mato Grosso in 1991 (0.38% of the total population). Most are Lebanese, concentrated in the Capital City, Cuiaba. In 1978, they established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muçulmana de Cuiaba". Later, they bought a piece of land. In 1977, they built on it their Mosque Complex, including an Islamic Center and an Islamic School, which has more than 200 students. They also have a qualified Imam.

Mato Grosso do Sul

There were about 10,000 Muslims in Mato Grosso do Sul in 1991 (0.53% of the total population). Most are Lebanese of recent immigration. They work in trade and business. They are organized in three cities : Campo Grande, Dourados and Corumba.

1 - Campo Grande (MS)

Campo Grande, the Capital of the State, is located at 740 km to the South of Cuiaba, the Capital of Mato Grosso. In the 1970's, its important Muslim Community established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muçulmana de Mato Grosso do Sul". In 1983, this society built its Mosque Complex, including an Islamic Center and a full-time Islamic School.

2 - Dourados (MS)

Dourados is located at 226 km to the South of Campo Grande, between the borders of Parana and Paraguay. It is the home of several thousands Muslims. In 1981, they established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muçulmana da Grande Dourados". By the end of the decade, they built their Mosque Complex.

3 - Corumba (MS)

Corumba is on the River Paraguay, right on the border with Bolivia, at 588 km to the North-East of Campo Grande. In 1982, its Muslim population, mostly of Palestinian origin, established the "Sociedade Beneficente de Corumba". They have a temporary mosque, and they plan to build an entire Mosque Complex.

Federal District of Brasilia

Brasilia is the Federal Capital of Brazil. The district was the home of at least 10,000 Muslims in 1991 (0.55% of the total population), most of Palestinian origin, others are Lebanese or Black Brazilians. Some of the suburbs, such as Taguatinga, Guara and Gama, have a high concentration of Muslims who own most of their shops. Almost all Muslims of Brasilia are Sunnis.

This Community was slow to organize. In the 1960's, before establishing a formal organization, the Minister of Lands offered them a 5,000 m² piece of land, in the middle of the city, with the condition of building a Mosque and Islamic Center on it within a given period of time. But the Community let the time pass without taking any action, leading the Minister of Lands to take back his offer.

In 1970, through the help of the Ambassador of Egypt in Brasilia, the Muslim Community received from the Minister of Lands a larger piece of land (8,700 m²) in a better part of Brasilia, open over three major avenues. The Minister made the same conditions of building a Mosque and Islamic Center within 4 years.

When this author visited Brasilia on 19-21/12/1973, he found the Muslim Community unorganized and felt that the land would be lost

for sure as the deadline was nearing. He met with the leaders of the Community, among them Mohammed Al-Majzub, Lebanese, Barakat Mohammed Sabr and Jabir Bs, Palestinian businessmen, and he convinced them to establish a Muslim association.

On 15/1/1974, the Muslim Community formed the "Centro Islamico do Brazil" (CIB) which was registered officially on 24/6/1975. However, the weakness of the Muslim Community and its slowness in action, made the project of the Mosque, Islamic Center and Islamic School fall completely in the hands of the Muslim diplomatic missions in Brasilia. They raised funds from their own countries and started building the Mosque Complex. In 1977, it was completed and inaugurated.

CIB is now run by a Council of ambassadors of Muslim countries, and not by the local Muslim Community, an odd situation compared to all other Islamic centers of Brazil. The ambassador of Pakistan was President in 1983 ; that of Saudi Arabia in 1994. The CIB objectives have been written as if it wanted to represent all Muslims of Brazil, referring all its actions to the entire Brazilian territory, and including such actions as "coordinating the activities of Muslims in Brazil".

Since 1973, the Egyptian Government has taken interest in the Muslim Community of Brasilia when they sent them a teacher of Islam and Arabic, Mr. Hilmi Budair. After 1975, the Muslim World League (Mecca, Saudi Arabia, MWL) started sending Imams, chosen in cooperation with the Azhar University and paid by them. With the exception of Sheikh Bakkali, a Moroccan, all are Egyptian. Table 5.2 gives the list of Brasilia Imams since the CIB establishment.

In 1984, the Brasilia Mosque was extended to become more impressive. Most of the cost was borne out by Saudi Arabia. The Imam leads the prayers, including on Friday where about 60 faithful are present. He performs Islamic marriages and pacts of inheritance. He leads the celebrations of the two main Eids, Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr, to usually more than 500 persons.

Table 5.2 : The Imams of Brasilia

Name of Imam	Dates of Service
Md Abdul-Zaher Abu-Al-Samh	1975-1977
Abdul-Aziz Al-Inani	1977-1982
Md Al-Bakkali	1982-1986
Muhsin Al-Husseini	1986-1990
Md Zaydan	1990-1994
Md Al-Bassus	1994-...

CIB received a plot of land near the Brasilia public cemetery to be used it as a Muslim Cemetery. The first Muslims were buried in it in 1983.

The Brasilia Islamic School includes a kindergarten and a primary school. It has about 200 pupils. As elsewhere, it gives the Brazilian program of education in addition to Arabic language and Islamic classes.

The Palestinian Community, eager to carry out its own activities, established a "Palestinian Club" in one of the suburbs.

Brasilia became also the site of many Islamic meetings since the "First Muslim Youth Camps" was held in it on July 1976 with 134 participants from Sao Paolo (82), Parana (32) and DF (20).

6 - Islam in the North

This vast region of Brazil includes seven states and federal territories. Its economy is based on the forest and the extraction of minerals. It is limited to the East by the North-Eastern Region; to the North by the Atlantic Ocean, French Guiana, Surinam, Guyana, and Venezuela ; to the West by Colombia and Peru ; and to the South by

Bolivia and the Central-Western Region of Brazil. The North is the home of 6.8% of the total population of Brazil and covers 45.2% of its area. Table 6.1 gives the population and the areas of the states and territories of the North.

Table 6.1 : The Northern Region of Brazil

State or territory	Area in km2	Population	
		1950	1990
Para	1,246,833	1,143,000	5,391,864
Amazonas	1,567,954	531,000	2,213,966
Rondonia	238,379	37,000	1,125,118
Tocantins	277,322		1,012,373
Acre	153,698	37,000	434,708
Amapa	142,359	38,000	267,576
Roraima	225,017	18,000	135,956
Total	3,851,562	1,804,000	10,581,561

The North is the fastest growing Brazilian region in population and economy. Since 1950, its population increased by almost 6 times. The state of Tocantins was established recently, its territories were before part of Goias state. Geographically, most of the North extends over the forest-covered Amazone Basin. Its climate is mostly equatorial with the exception of Rondonia and Roraima where the climate is semi-arid. The population of the North is highly diversified, mostly of mixed races, the original tribes are assaulted and their habitat is being destroyed. Many are on the verge extinction.

Para

Para is the most populated state of the Northern Region, and is the home of more than half of its population. Its capital, Belem, with one million people is the largest city of the North. In the past, it attracted many Muslims, mostly from Syria, who live out of trade. Many local

people converted to Islam, including the mayor of the city in 1974. However, while an "Arab Brazilian Center" has been established in Belem, the city has no Islamic organization or institution. The number of Muslims in 1991 could be estimated to be around 5,000 in the Para State (or about 0.1% of its total population).

Amazonas

Amazonas is the next largest state of the Region. Its capital, Manaus, has a population of about 500,000 people. It is located on Rio Negro, at 12 km from its encounter with the Amazone River. Manaus was the world capital of rubber and became very prosperous. But with the competition of South-East Asia, it lost its pre-eminence and entered a long period of decline. However, as it was established as a free zone, it witnesses today a new period of economic prosperity.

Among the first Muslims who arrived to Manaus was Abdul-Rasac Hauache, who originates from the Ghouta of Damascus (Syria). He arrived in Manaus in 1904. Other Syrians came with and after him. The second wave of Muslim arrivals came from Palestine in the period 1947-1948. To these elements, who are all Sunnis, must be added an increasing number of revert. Some are famous and influential, such as Judge Newton Sebbah Guermas, a judge in the State Court of Amazonas, who embraced Islam on 22/1/1975 in Curitiba (Parana), with the Curitiba Imam, Sheikh Hasan Al-Inani, as his witness.

At present, the Muslims of Manaus could be estimated to number about 2,000, including Palestinians (70%), Lebanese (15%), Syrians (10%), and local revert (5%). The entire state has a scattered Muslim population of about 10,000 (or 0.45% of its total population). Until 1970, they were in an advanced state of assimilation, as they came from old immigration.

The Muslim Community of Amazonas remained unorganized until it formed in 1975 "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana do Amazonas" (SBMA) in Manaus. One of its first presidents, Mohamed Taraya, was

born in Palestine in 1942 and emigrated to Brazilia in 1961, then to Manaus in 1970. He owns a shop in downtown Manaus. SBMA started in a temporary Islamic Center with Friday prayers and a voluntary acting Imam. In 1981, SBMA started evening Arabic and Islamic classes, two hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The teacher is a local Lebanese paid by the Community. SBMA started the construction of a Mosque and a full-time Islamic School. Thus, Manaus is becoming an important and growing center of Islamic presence in Northern Brazil.

Most Manaus Muslims work in commerce. Many rose in the social ladder, such as General Mohamed in the Brazilian army and Senator Layla Hussein in the Federal Senate. The Hauache family is also both a story of success and Islamic commitment. The two children of Abdul-Rasac, mentioned above, Mohieddin and Khalid, became famous industrialists. This author had lunch with them in the home of Mohieddin on Saturday 22/12/1973 in Sao Bernardo near Sao Paulo City. Khaled owns a television chain with about 50 stations, textiles, rubber plantations, etc... He was the force behind the establishment of SBMA and he is its Honorary President. His son, Abdul-Rasac, is in the information business and the director of the television chain of his father.

Rondonia

Rondonia is the third largest state of the North Region. It is located between Mato Grosso, Amazonas and Bolivia. It is in full expansion, as its population multiplied thirty times since 1950. Its capital is Porto Velho on the Madeira River. A number of Muslims from Lebanon and Palestine emigrated to this state. Many live in Vilhena, a small town on the border with Mato Grosso. In the 1980's, they established the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana". They plan now to establish their Islamic institutions. The total Muslim population of Rondonia is about 5,000 (0.44% of total population).

Other States

The other states and territories are Tocantins in the South-East, between the states of Para, Goias and Maranhao ; Acre, in the South-West, on the border with Peru ; Amapa, on the North- East, between Para and French Guiana ; and Roraima, in the North, between Amazonas, Guyana and Venezuela. They total an area of 798,396 km² and a population of 1,850,000 in 1990. These states and territories are the home of a scattered Muslim population of maybe 10,000. They have yet no Muslim organizations or institutions.

7 - Islam in the North-East

Nine states constitute the North-East region, the closest part of America to Africa. It is limited to the East and the North by the Atlantic Ocean ; to the West by the Northern and the Central-West regions ; and to the South by the South-East Region. The North-East is the home of 28.6% of the total population of Brazil and covers only 18.3% of its total area. Table 7.1 gives the population and areas of its states.

Table 7.1 : The North-Eastern Region of Brazil

State	Area in Km ²	Population	
		1950	1990
Bahia	566,979	4,900,000	12,174,961
Pernambuco	101,023	3,431,000	7,603,176
Ceara	145,694	2,736,000	6,666,651
Maranhao	329,556	1,600,000	5,274,797
Paraiba	53,958	1,731,000	3,420,340
Piaui	251,273	1,064,000	2,799,919
Alagoas	29,107	1,107,000	2,522,197
Rio Grande do Norte	53,167	984,000	2,451,076
Sergipe	21,863	650,000	1,516,064
Total	1,556,001	18,203,000	44,429,181

The North-East is made up of hills of low altitude and plains in the North and the East. The climate is mostly tropical. This region is where Portuguese Brazil actually started, where the first capitals of the colony were built, especially Salvador (Bahia). The wealth of the Region is based on agriculture, especially sugarcane, tobacco and coffee, then cacao, maize and cotton. Industries based on these products followed in the Twentieth Century.

This was the first Brazilian Region where Muslims immigrated, first from Andalucia in the 16th century, and later as enslaved Africans. It is in Salvador where they rebelled in the 19th Century. After the defeat of the Muslim rebellion in 1835, Islam was prohibited. Then, most African Muslims kept their religion secret or lost it altogether. This situation changed for the better in 1889, when the Republic was established in Brazil, and Church and State were separated.

The number of Muslims of African origin in the North-East could be estimated to number about 80,000 at least. Their Islamic situation is improving. Because of the disintegration of their organization and the secrecy imposed on them in the past, they were mixing their Islamic beliefs with many un-Islamic concepts. Today, this situation is improving greatly due to their contact with the freshly arriving Muslims from Greater Syria and with international Islamic organizations, such as the Muslim World League in Mecca (Saudi Arabia).

Those who studied the African Brazilian Muslims in the 1950's, deduced from what they saw in appearance that they are not any more Muslim. But many kept Islamic behavior such as washing hands before eating, bearing Muslim names such as "Mohamed", and even visiting old mosques such as one near the City of Bahia. Reichert (1966) even jumped to the conclusion of identifying Manuel Nascimento de Santos Silva, who died in Bahia in 1959, as the last

Brazilian African Muslim. His Islamic name was Djibirulu, he "identified himself as the last Muslim".

Reichert said that the Muslim Africans of Brazil are originally Haussa, Fulanis, Nubians and Yoruba. They are called in Brazil "Musulumi", meaning "Muslim" in the Hausa language. He said that Muslim words are still common among Brazilian Blacks. They say "Allah" or "Olorom" for "God" (Olorom is God in Hausa). Bazan (1971) said that they have leaders they call "Liman" (Imam). Their Muslim prayers, they call "sara" (Salat), are distorted : when some men pray, women watch them while chanting "Bismillah". They perform the fast, they call "Sumi" (Sawm), during the month of Ramadhan. The "Liman" has helpers they call "Cherif". They pray while they hold beads they call "tesiba" (tesbih). They fear bad spirits they call "Jenum" (Djin). Bazan saw written on a shop in the town of "Baeza dos Sapateros" in Bahia State the following expression "Kosi Oba Kan Ofi Olorun", which means in Yoruba "There is no deity but Allah". Usually, these Black Brazilians repeat what they call "Chahada" : "Babu Sarki Say Allah", which means in Hausa "There is no deity but Allah". These are in fact Muslims in all the meaning of the word. They cannot be considered otherwise.

It is difficult for people who, for generations, kept their religion secret to come out and declare it in the open. This is the case in Spain. It is also in Brazil in general, and the North-East in particular, although there is absolute freedom of religion in the country today. However, since the 1990, efforts have been made by the "Centro de Divulgacao Do Islam A America Latina" of Sao Paulo to establish nuclei of organization in the North-East, around which the Muslims would gather and establish their institutions.

Bahia State

This is the old core of Brazil and the center of old Islamic presence. Today, a new wave of Muslims started to come to its capital, Salvador, for different reasons. Muslim African students came

to study in the Catholic University of Salvador; Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese arrived for trade, etc... Abdurahim Abdalla, who emigrated to Brazil from Palestine in 1956, was among the first Muslim new arrivals to Salvador in 1958. These Muslims were unable to establish links with each other. Each followed Islam in a solitary manner as best he can.

In October 1990, delegates from Sao Paulo established contact with Professor Sid Teixeira, a specialist on the history of the Males. Several meetings led to the establishment of the "Islamic Center of Bahia" (ICB) in a rented facility in Salvador in February 1991, with Misbah Akani as its director. Arabic and Islamic classes are now given in ICB, and prayers are held regularly, including on Fridays. The ICB members include two dozen families, half local Brazilians, and the other hailing from Palestine, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, USA, Turkey, Jamaica and France. The Jamaican is a famous local singer revert, his Muslim name is Naim Bashir (former Jimmy Clive). Most Brazilian members are related with the University.

There is in Salvador another organization of African Brazilian Muslims called "Palmares", in memory of the "Palmares Republic" mentioned above. One of its active members is Benedicto Ivan Galvan, a journalist.

There are Muslim groups in most towns of Bahia, including African Brazilians. However, they did not yet come back to the open to organize themselves as Muslim communities.

Pernambuco

In the 1990's, local Muslims established the "Islamic Cultural Center" in Recife, the Capital of Pernambuco. Its director of information is Rasheed Meita, a Brazilian lawyer known as a speaker on spiritual issues in the local television. Another active member is Nadja Maria de Barros, a journalist.

Ceara

Fortaleza, the capital of the Ceara State, is the home of many Brazilian Muslims who are not yet organized formally. However, in 1991, they sent one of their young Mohammed Hussein (formerly Luis Alberto Peineiro Gomes) to study at the Islamic University of Medina (Saudi Arabia). It is hoped that he would return a 'alim to teach his community Islam.

Piaui

The capital of the Piaui State, Teresina, is on the border with the Maranhao State. It is the home of a local Brazilian Muslim Community, headed by Mohammed Ali Hussein (formerly Valdemar Cardoso Reibeiro), a businessman, trained in Islamic studies in the Islamic Center of Brasilia. This Community is not yet formally organized.

Rio Grande do Norte

The capital of Rio Grande de Norte, Natal, is the home of about 50 families of Druze origin, about 20 Muslim Lebanese families and other Muslims of diverse origins (Africans, revert, etc ..). However, they are not organized yet. Other Muslims are dispersed in the State.

Paraiba

There are a dozen Muslim families in the city of Campina Grande, many born in Brazil. Others arrived in the 1960's, mostly from Palestine. There are also some Muslims in Joao Passao. These Muslims are not organized.

Maranhao

Few Muslims are in Maranhao State. They are not yet organized.

Alagoas

Some Muslims live in Alagoas. They are dispersed and not organized yet.

Sergipe

No Muslim organization or institution exists in Sergipe for its few dispersed Muslims.

8 - Local Organization in Brazil

There are three types of Islamic organization in Brazil, each formed in a different period of the history of Islam in the country: The "Male Organization"; the "Arab Organization" and the "Present Organization".

The "Male Organization" is the one that survived from Muslims of African origin. It was based on the charismatic leadership of a "Male" (Mu'allim : teacher) who led his community for life and made the major decisions. After the defeat of the Muslim rebellion in 1835 and the prohibition of Islam, this organization became secret. With time, it incorporated un-Islamic beliefs and magic. This organization is actually similar to that of soufi orders. However, because of the secrecy and the lack of contacts with the Ummah, the community went slowly away from Islam. It is only since the 1980's that this organization is slowly coming out to the open, closer to Sunni Islam and closer to the "Present Organization".

When Arabs started emigrating to Brazil (and elsewhere in America) in the 19th Century, they were divided between four identities : local (village of origin) ; state (Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian) ; national (Arab) ; and Islamic. Any of the four identities could contradict another. For instance, a local identity separates people of the same state, a state identity divides Arab people, and an Arab national identity undermines the Islamic one as Arabs in Brazil are of different religious beliefs. An Islamic identity ignores the local, state and national identities.

Since 1896, Arab immigrants, started to establish "Welfare Associations" (Sociedade Beneficente) with the specific purpose of

helping each other and teaching Arabic to their children. These associations were not religious, and Arabs of all denominations, Muslims and non-Muslims, were members. As the Arab Community grew in numbers, they started looking for more links with each other and started establishing clubs.

Most organizations established by the first Arab immigrants were of the three first ones mentioned above : the local type, e.g., the Yabrud Club, Yabrud being a town in Syria from where the members of this Club came, the Homs Association, etc..., these continued the patterns of family influences imported from back home ; the state type, e.g., the Lebanese Club, the Palestinian Club, and rarely the Syrian Club, as traditionally Syrians were promoters of the Arab National identity. These organizations were supported respectively by the states established after World War I. They enabled them control better the relations of their emigrants of their state of origin.

Arab organizations were encouraged by nationalist movements. The purely Arab organizations, bringing Muslims and Christians together, lasted for a while in the form of clubs but did not satisfy Muslims. Indeed, Christian Arabs were in a Christian majority country and had no fear to see their children lose their faith. This is not the same for Muslims. However, both Christian and Muslim Arabs were eager to keep the Arabic language and culture among their offspring, but "Arab Clubs" could not defend Arabic and played no role in safeguarding Islam.

In 1929, these difficulties led the Muslims of Sao Paulo to establish the first Muslim organization, the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Sao Paulo" (SBMSP). The founders thought of a welfare organization giving the Muslims the services usually supplied by Arab Christian welfare organizations. All other activities were carried out in parallel by the same members in "Arab", "state" and "local" organizations.

Slowly, SBMSP started to respond to Muslim needs by necessity. Thus, it established the first Brazilian mosque in 1950, while its planning started in the 1930's. The mosque was beautiful, but was no more than a praying hall, with no conference halls and no school. Other facilities were added later. SBMSP had a membership originating from the three countries of emigration : Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, but also from Egypt and elsewhere.

Egypt had a great influence on this Muslim open presence (the only one then in Brazil). Consequently, the Egyptian Nasser Revolution had a direct effect on the organization of Brazilian Muslims. In 1956, Al-Azhar University nominated Sheikh Abdullah Kamil as SBMSP Imam. He tried for the 19 years of his tenure to implement Islam as understood by Nasser, i.e., identifying it with Arab nationalism. He was the absolute leader of Brazilian Muslims and saw himself as the great Imam of Brazil and all of South America. He opposed the building of any new mosque as he saw it as a threat to his "power". He even changed the name of "Adh-Dhikra", the mosque magazine, into "Al-Urubah".

When this author visited Brazil on 18-25/12/1973 as a delegate of the Muslim World League to the Muslim Community of South America, he found eight Islamic organizations, including SBMSP, two old weak organizations in Rio de Janeiro, and five other organizations forming what could be defined as the basis of the "Present Organization". Three of these organizations have been established in the 1960's and two have been established in the 1950's : the "Islamic Club in Brazil" (1956) in Sao Paolo and the "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana de Parana" (1957, SBMP) in Curitiba. The first responded to the need for Islamic education and social activities that were not served by SBMSP. The second was a real rebellion on the system established by SBMSP : it was established in a different state (Parana) on the Shurah Principle, i.e., growing from the roots and not accepting the SBMSP hegemony.

In fact, SBMP was the prototype of basic Islamic organization followed by all the ones established later. Eventually, after the 1967 Seven Day War and the discredit of Nasser-type Arab nationalism, even SBMSP followed the SBMP prototype. The latter has been supported and encouraged by this author as he saw in it the best way to build up the Muslim Community from the roots (the individual) upwards (the national Muslim organization representing all Brazilian Muslims).

The local organization, as represented by SBMP, tries to be for the Muslims what corresponds to the parish for the Christians, with the difference that office bearers are elected by the congregation, as there is no clergy in Islam. The Imam is not the absolute leader as in SBMSP, he is only the adviser on educational and religious affairs, the executive being the elected committee. The center of the association is now a "Mosque Complex", including the Mosque proper (i.e. the prayer hall with minaret, dome, ablution facilities, etc...), the Community Center (i.e., celebration halls, libraries, sports facilities, conference hall, etc ..), administrative offices of the organization, and a full-time Islamic School (primary and often secondary as well) that gives the official Brazilian programs in addition to Arabic and Islamic studies.

Thus, this new type of organization established in Brazil an island of Islamic life in the sea of non-Muslim society. It was indeed a revolution in Islamic organization that started bearing its fruits only after the 1970's. This is the basis of the Islamic revival in Brazil.

The constitution of SBMP defines among its most important objectives in the order mentioned :

- 1 - Uniting the Muslim and their descendants ;
- 2 - creating in the Muslim Community the spirit of cooperation ;
- 3 - giving all types of assistance (medical, dental, judicial and funeral) to its members ;

- 4 - establishing a school which teaches in Arabic and Portuguese, including Islamic religion ;
- 5 - building a Mosque in Curitiba and maintaining it.

9 - The Growth in Islamic Institutions

The number of Brazilian Islamic associations increased from only three before 1956 to about 51 in 1991 by the last count as shown by state in Table 9.1. This is fast growth by any standards. If the distribution is shown by economic region as in Table 9.2, the areas of Muslim concentration in Brazil become clearer.

The Region of highest Muslim concentration is by far the South-East Region (25 associations), more specifically the Sao Paulo State (20 associations), where the first Muslim association started. This Region is followed by the Southern Region (14 associations), more specially the Parana State (9 associations), where Islamic presence started in the 1950's. In the 1960's, the Muslims of the South-Western Region (8 associations) started to organize, mainly in Goias and Matto Grosso do Sul states (each 3 associations). They were followed in the 1970's, by the Muslims of North (2 associations), and in the 1980's by those of North-East (2 associations). Thus, at present, Muslims are organized in all the Brazilian regions, and soon they will be organized in all its states .

As the Islamic Society as formed in Brazil is a community organization for the Muslims of a given town or city, forming the Muslim "Jamaat" in that location (corresponding to the parish in Christian denominations), it would be appropriate to describe how such Islamic Society comes into being.

Table 9.1: Growth in the Number of Islamic Societies per Brazilian states.

State	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
Sao Paolo	1	2	3	8	20
Rio de Janeiro	2	2	2	3	4
Ninas Gerais	0	0	0	0	1
Parana	0	1	3	6	9
Santa Catarina	0	0	0	1	3
Rio Grande do Sul	0	0	0	0	2
Goias	0	0	0	1	3
Matto Grosso	0	0	0	1	1
Matto Grosso do Sul	0	0	0	1	3
Distrito Federal	0	0	0	1	1
Amazonas	0	0	0	1	1
Rondonia	0	0	0	0	1
Bahia	0	0	0	0	1
Pernambuco	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	5	8	23	51

In Brazil as in most countries of the world, Muslims organize from the roots, i.e., the decision of a group of Muslims to get together. There is no overall "Islamic organizations" that establish communities from the top. Every single society starts through the initiative of an individual. Two questions are of interest: what is the "prototype" of such pioneering individual ? and how came that practically all Brazilian "Islamic Societies" correspond to one single prototype, and are similar in organization and actions?

Table 9.1 : Growth in the Number of Islamic Societies per Brazilian economic regions.

Region	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
South-East	3	4	5	11	25
South	0	1	3	8	14
Central-West	0	0	0	3	8

Following Table 9.1 : Growth in the Number of Islamic Societies per Brazilian economic regions.

North	0	0	0	1	2
North-East	0	0	0	0	2
Total	3	5	8	23	51

The answer to the second question is that the pioneering society that became the prototype for all others to follow is SBMP of Curitiba (Parana), as seen before. Itself was been influenced by SBMSP of Sao Paulo (SP), the first Brazilian Muslim using in its name "Sociedade Beneficente Muculmana" (SBM) as in the names of all later societies. SBMSP thought of itself at the SBM "do Brazil". Later, when a society was established in another state, being the first of that state, it became for instance the SBM "do Parana". When others societies were established in the same state they became for instance SBM "de Londrina e Norte Parana" or simply SBM "de Maringa". As more societies were established they bore the name of their suburb, while the earlier ones either changed their names, or in spite of the name become no more than another SBM. Sometimes instead of "Muculmana" the word "Islamica" is used ; sometimes "Arabe" is added, but in the Brazilian context there are differences of small importance. Thus, the complete harmony of the Islamic organizational set-up in Brazil.

The answer to the first question is that the initiator of an Islamic society could be practically anybody: most often he is a man, but the person could be a woman. He is usually a born Muslim, but he could be a revert. He could be religious or not religious at all. He could have experience in organization or just copy the existing prototype. He could remain an important member in the Islamic leadership, or disappear altogether from the scene once the society is set up. He is often a resident, but could perfectly be a transient. Briefly, it is not important who starts the society, as long as there is in the group a

desire to organize. In that case, once "somebody" presents the idea, he is usually followed. Thus, Brazilian Islamic organization, as elsewhere, is spontaneous. This is another important characteristic of the present-day Islamic revival.

Of all Muslims in Brazil, the Lebanese are the most Islamically aware, as they established most Islamic societies. Palestinians are Islamically in a worse shape, divided as they are between "Palestinian Club" (of no effect in saving their identity) and "Islamic Society". Due to this weakness, the mostly Palestinian Muslim population of Brasilia lost control of the Islamic Center to the Muslim embassies. But since the 1980's there is a clear return of the Palestinian communities to Islam. Most Syrians are of old immigration and their presence is felt only in the Amazonas and some areas of Sao Paolo. The African and Portuguese Brazilians are returning to Islam, as communities of both are springing up across Brazil. The 1990's will certainly witness more presence of both in the Islamic leadership.

All Islamic societies tend to establish a "Mosque Complex" as described above. Usually, these are imposing buildings with an attractive Islamic style including domes and minarets. Out of the established 51 Islamic societies, 31 have already completed their Mosque Complexes as shown in Table 9.3. The others are in the process of building theirs or planning them.

Table 9.3 : Mosque Complexes (MC) per State in Brazil in 1991

State	MC. Number	SOC. Number
Sao Paolo	12	20
Parana	7	9
Rio de Janeiro	2	4
Goias	3	3
Matto Grosso do Sul	7	3

Following Table 9.3 : Mosque Complexes (MC) per State in Brazil in 1991

Santa Catarina	1	3
Rio Grande do sul	0	2
Minas Gerais	0	1
Matto Grosso	1	1
Distrito Federal	1	1
Amazonas	1	1
Rondonia	0	1
Pernambuco	0	1
Bahia	0	1
Total	31	51

10—The federation of Muslim Associations of Brazil (FAMBRAS)

In September 1970, when there was no more than eight Brazilian Muslim societies, the "First Conference of Islamic Organizations in Brazil and Latin America" was held in Sao Paulo. It was attended by delegations from Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela, and representatives of the governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan and Iran.

Important recommendations were made in this conference, including the establishment of an "Islamic Council" to "guide the Islamic movement of Brazil and Latin America" to be located in Brazil, being "the strong center of Islamic activity in the continent". This resolution was not implemented immediately as the Imam of the Sao Paulo Mosque wanted to use it to establish himself as the leader of Muslims of South America, within the "Old Organization" with the Sao Paulo Mosque as the Central Mosque of South America.

In 1980, ten years later, the "Federaco das Associacoes Muculmanas do Brazil" (FAMBRAS, Federation of Muslim Associations of Brazil) was established in Brasilia, with all Muslim societies as members. Its constitution was registered officially as the representative organization of the Muslims of Brazil. It states in its first article of the first part that:

"FAMBRAS functions as per law from its seat in the Federal District of Brasilia, as a non-profit organization which does not differentiate people by race, color, social situation or political views, as a sport and other Islamic institutions in Brasil, including those of temporary character or which are purely religious".

FAMBRAS'aims are stated in the second article as :

- a) coordination between Islamic institutions and organizations in the different states of Brazil and planning for the strentheiring of their activities ;
- b) acting as a link between Muslim organizations in Brazil and the Brazilian Federal Government on the one hand, and between the Brazilian Muslim organisations and Muslim organizations and institutions around the world, on the other ;
- c) representing Brazilian Islamic Institutions in different regional and international meetings ;
- d) receiving grants from individuals and organizations in Brazil and abroad and distribute them to its member associations ;
- e) organizing a yearly conference of member societies and writing an overall report for the yearly meeting of FAMBRAS ;
- f) organizing fund-raising campaigns in all Brazilian states, distributing 75% of the income to member societies and keeping 25% for its own projects ;
- g) creating an Islamic institution for research, publication and translation of Islamic works in coordination with Islamic organizations and institutions around the world ;

- h) defending the interests of Brazilian Muslims, and representing them to the Brazilian Government.
- i) promoting good will and understanding with all Brazilian communities of Brazil, independently of religion, race, color or gender;
- j) teaching Brazilian culture and Portuguese language to incoming migrant Muslims and facilitating their integration in Brazil.

The second part of FAMBRAS constitution deals with financial matters, whereas the third part describes its activities as follows:

- a) in the field of Da'wah : training teachers and Imams, distributing Qur'ans and other Islamic books in Arabic, Portuguese and other languages, establishing Islamic libraries for research and reference, training people for da'wah in all Brazil, educating the poor and the needy, muslims and non-muslims, convincing education institutions to introduce Islamic education in their programs and to teach Arabic ;
- b) establishing a "Central Mosque Committee" made up by Mosque representatives in Brazil, with the function of helping protect existing mosques, maintaining them and establishing new ones, each including a library, a school, a kindergarden, a youth club and a women club. The president of this Committee shall be elected from among the Imams of the mosques;
- c) in the field of education and culture : helping establish Muslim schools ; training male and female teachers from among local Muslims ; granting Islamic books to public libraries and TV stations, and video tapes on Qur'an reading, movies on Hajj and Islam and Muslims in general ; giving scholarships for study ; and exchanging teachers between Brazilian and Muslim universities ;
- d) presenting the truth about Islam and using the media for responding to those who criticize it ;

- e) in the field of information: starting da'wah emissions and using existing radio and TV stations to reach the masses ;
- f) collaborating with the "Islamic Center of Brasilia" to produce "The Voice of Islam" and other magazines ;
- g) in the field of youth and women: encouraging their participation in the Islamic centers, organizing youth camps and conferences, and establishing a "Women Committee" to encourage women to contribute positively in the Muslim society ;
- h) collecting and distributing zakat and alms and establishing a committee for this purpose ;
- i) taking care of Muslim orphans and widows and building hospitals, orphanages, homes for senior citizens and other welfare institutions.

The fourth part of FAMBRAS' constitution lists members rights and duties. The fifth describes its organization as made up of a general assembly, an executive committee and a board of directors with directorates and committees. The general assembly is made up of the representatives of member societies.

Part six describes the duties of Executive Committee members: The President is elected for a two year period from among representatives of member societies. There are four Vice-Presidents, a Secretary General, an Arabic secretary, a Portuguese Secretary, a Treasurer, two Assistant Treasurers, a Press Attache, a Cultural Attache, a Director of Properties and an Islamic Shariah Councillor.

The remaining three parts of the constitution describe the different types of meetings, the bye-laws, and the General Assembly.

The FAMBRAS' Constitution was registered in the town of San Bernardo do Campo in the Sao Paulo State on 16/5/1980 and signed by the FAMBRAS' first President, Hussein M. Al-Zoghbi (the President of the "Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica de Santo Amaro"). The Vice-President was Said Hussein Yassine (the SBMSP President).

Since then, FAMBRAS has been active in helping member (the President of SBMSP) societies. They helped financially many Muslim communities build their mosques and schools, much as the ones in Jundiai, Sao Bernardo do Campo, Campinas and Santo Amaro (Sao Paulo State), Guarapuava and Ponta Grossa (Parana), Campo Grande (Goiana), Lajes (Santa Catarina), and others. FAMBRAS managed to bring Imams to communities which needed them such as in Jundiai and Santos in Sao Paulo State. They also helped Islamic schools with teachers of Islam and Arabic.

FAMBRAS established an Information Committee which concentrates on radio and television emissions on Islam. It is also carrying out a detailed census of the Muslims in Brazil and their distribution, in view of coordinating help from more prosperous communities to lesser ones.

Since 1982, FAMBRAS started publishing a monthly magazine called "Voz da Federacao" under the direction of Ms Sukaina Al-Haj. This publication has about 32 pages in Arabic and Portuguese.

11 - Islamic Schools and Youth Camps

Brazilian Muslims give great importance to children education. All Muslim children go to school. There is also a higher level of university graduates among the Muslims than in the general population. Furthermore, many Brazilian Muslims are famous in industry (Khalid Hauache, Said Dirghan, Mustafa Abdun), medical field (Ismael Rajab, Munif Haer, Mustafa Arabi), law, politics and at the university. Most are second or higher generation Muslims or revert.

Brazilian Muslims not only worry about the secular education of their children, but also about their Islamic education. Thus, one of the most important Islamic institutions in Brazil is the full-time Islamic school. The first such school was opened by the SBMSP in Sao Paulo

City in 1968. It was followed by another in Curitiba (Parana) in 1971. Then, the full-time Islamic school became an integral part of the "Mosque Complex" established by every single Islamic society. By 1991, they increased to 27. They were 15 in 1981 and 2 in 1971.

Brazilian Muslims are aware that the Islamic School is best for protecting their children from de-Islamization and helping them integrate in Brazilian society with a stronger Islamic identity. In fact, Islamic schools are usually open to all as non-Muslim children are welcome if they are willing to follow the entire program. The curriculum given in these schools is the official Brazilian program, in addition to Islam and Arabic.

For example, the three first levels of Islam and Arabic curricula given in the Paranagua (Parana) Islamic Primary School opened on October 1976, were :

First level :

a) Islamic curriculum : memorizing the Qur'anic Surahs of Al-Falaq, Al-Kawthar and Al-Masad ; teaching the Islamic declaration of faith (I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah) and its explanation; teaching the following Islamic expressions and explaining them : Allahu-Akbar, Al-Hamdu-Lillah, Asalam-Alaikum, Wa-Alaikum Assalam, Subhana Rabbi Al-'Ala.

b) Arabic curriculum: teaching the Arabic alphabet, and the Arabic numerical symbols ; writing and reading basic words ; learning in more detail the Arabic letters of ba, dal, ra, jim, ayn, sin and zay.

Second level :

a) Islamic curriculum : memorizing the surahs of Quraish, Al-Fil and Al-Humazah ; revising the surahs memorized in the first level ; writing all the memorized surahs ; explaining the story behind surah Al-Fil ; explaining the surah Al-Qadr and what is the Laylat-Al-Qadr ; explaining again the Islamic declaration faith ; teaching the wudu' and salat ; teaching the call for prayer.

b) Arabic curriculum : writing sentences and their dictation ; teaching arithmetics in Arabic ; teaching Arabic Islamic songs.

Third level :

a) Islamic curriculum : memorizing the surahs of Al-Adiyat, Al-Zalzalah, Al-Bayyinah, Al-Qadr, Al-Alaq and explaining them ; teaching again wudu' and salat ; teaching du'a after salat.

b) Arabic curriculum : teaching Arabic grammar, the verbs and their tenses, the noun, the adjectives ; giving the most important verbs with their translation in Portuguese; teaching Arabic dictation and calculus in Arabic.

Another Islamic institution established by Brazilian Muslims is the Islamic Youth Camp. These are held regularly around the year, especially during school vacations. These camps bring together in an Islamic atmosphere young Muslim boys and girls of one state, one group of states, or the whole Brazil and South America. These youth camps have an important role in giving to the growing Muslim generations the feeling of community. The young come to know and respect each other. They keep contact after the camp, and eventually start new Muslim families through marriage.

In the following, as an example, a detailed description is given of the youth camp held on 1-10/2/1981, at 60 km from Sao Paulo, half way on the road to Campinas. Its director was Dr. Yacob Mirza. The camp was held in a hotel having beautiful and widespread sport facilities and good lodgings.

About 140 young Muslims took part in this camp. Most came from Brazil ; others from Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Bolivia and even Barbados, Trinidad, Guyana, Canada and the USA. In this camp, all participants were males. Usually, both males and females are present.

Activities included conferences, group discussions, collective studies, and sports. Congregational prayers, days of fasting and Qur'anic studies were part of the program. Discipline was very strict,

especially concerning Islamic morality, and professors of great re-known were invited to give lectures.

This Islamic Youth Camp was opened by the Governor of the Sao Paulo State (an Arab Christian) who helped by supplying three limousines to the organizers. The press, radio and TV gave sympathetic daily reports.

12 - Conclusion

Brazilian Muslims are responding well to the many challenges that are facing, the main being the education within Islam of the growing generations of Muslims born in Brazil.

The second most important challenge is uniting the Muslim community in one Brazilian Ummah. Brazilian Muslims took the initiative of establishing FAMBRAS as their national body grouping all Muslim societies. Thus, they have succeeded in uniting themselves and responding well to the challenge. However, this response did not go unchallenged.

Indeed, the weakness of the Muslim Community of Brasilia resulted in their loss of control of the Islamic Center of Brasilia. The latter is headed by a Council of Ambassadors of Muslim countries accredited to Brazil, and only one lone representative of FAMBRAS. This Council tries to think of itself as the National coordinator of Brazilian Muslims, similar to the role played before by the Islamic Center of Sao Paulo. This is a potentially dangerous situation, as it creates another line of grouping of Muslim societies headed by diplomatic representatives of Muslim countries.

This situation does not help in building up a national Muslim community, and is a potential of future conflicts.

The Brazilian Muslim Community has good relations with Muslim countries. The first to be interested in them was Egypt, even before the

1952 Nasser coup-d'état. Indeed, Al-Azhar University took the habit of sending them Imams, and to Brazilian universities professors of Islamic and Arabic studies, all paid by the Government of Egypt. However, the tendency of trying to control Muslims and propagate the Nasser-type Arab Nationalism did not promote Islamic growth.

In the 1970's, during the reign of late King Faisal, Saudi Arabia and Saudi-based Islamic organizations, such as the Muslim World League (MWL) of Mecca, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) of Riyadh, and Dar-ul-Ifta of Riyadh also, became very much present in Brazil. The Saudi role has been important in supporting the actions of different Muslim societies, especially in building Mosque complexes and in sending Imams.

In the past, Iraq helped several societies by sending a dozen Arabic teachers, mainly to the states of Sao Paulo and Parana. They also sent tens of thousands of Qur'ans and tafseers as well as books for the Islamic schools.

Libya helped with Islamic publications, and conferences, especially through the "Arab-Brazilian Cultural Center" in Sao Paulo. It also supported many societies through "Jam'i'at Da'wah Islamia" in Tripoli.

Pakistan sent books to Muslims and facilitates their contacts with the Muslim world in general and Pakistan in particular.

Since the 1980's, Iran became present, mainly with the Shia communities in Curitiba (Parana), Colina (Sao Paolo) and Pari (Sao Paulo).

Syria, Jordan, the PLO, Kuwait and the UAE also helped Brazilian Muslim societies by sending teachers, helping in the establishment of Islamic institutions, or invitations to Islamic conferences.

Nevertheless, all this help from Muslim countries is really small compared to the efforts of the Brazilian Muslim Community itself. To it goes the credit of keeping contact with so many countries in conflict

without losing its cohesion, and staying clear from any potential causes of division in its ranks.

On the other hand, international Islamic conferences have an important role in coordinating the work of different Brazilian Muslim societies. The latest is the "Eighth International Conference of the Muslims of Latin America" held in Sao Paulo on 17-20/6/1994, on the theme of the "Present Situation of Muslims in South America".

The Brazilian Muslim Community made a gigantic step forward during the last twenty years. Its "Mosque complexes" will certainly double in number in the 1990's, as will the number of Muslims as more descendants of old Muslim migrations, especially African Brazilians return to Islam and become more active. Sao Paulo is becoming a center of Islamic propagation, not only for Brazil, but for all of South America and more Islamic Institutions are expected to be established in that metropolis in the future.

Brazilian Muslims are reputed for being good citizens. Their commitment to Brazil is clear and their relations with local and federal authorities as well as with other Brazilians are excellent. The problems faced by the Muslims in Western Europe, such as hijab in school, are unimaginable in Brazil, a credit to the Brazilian people.

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